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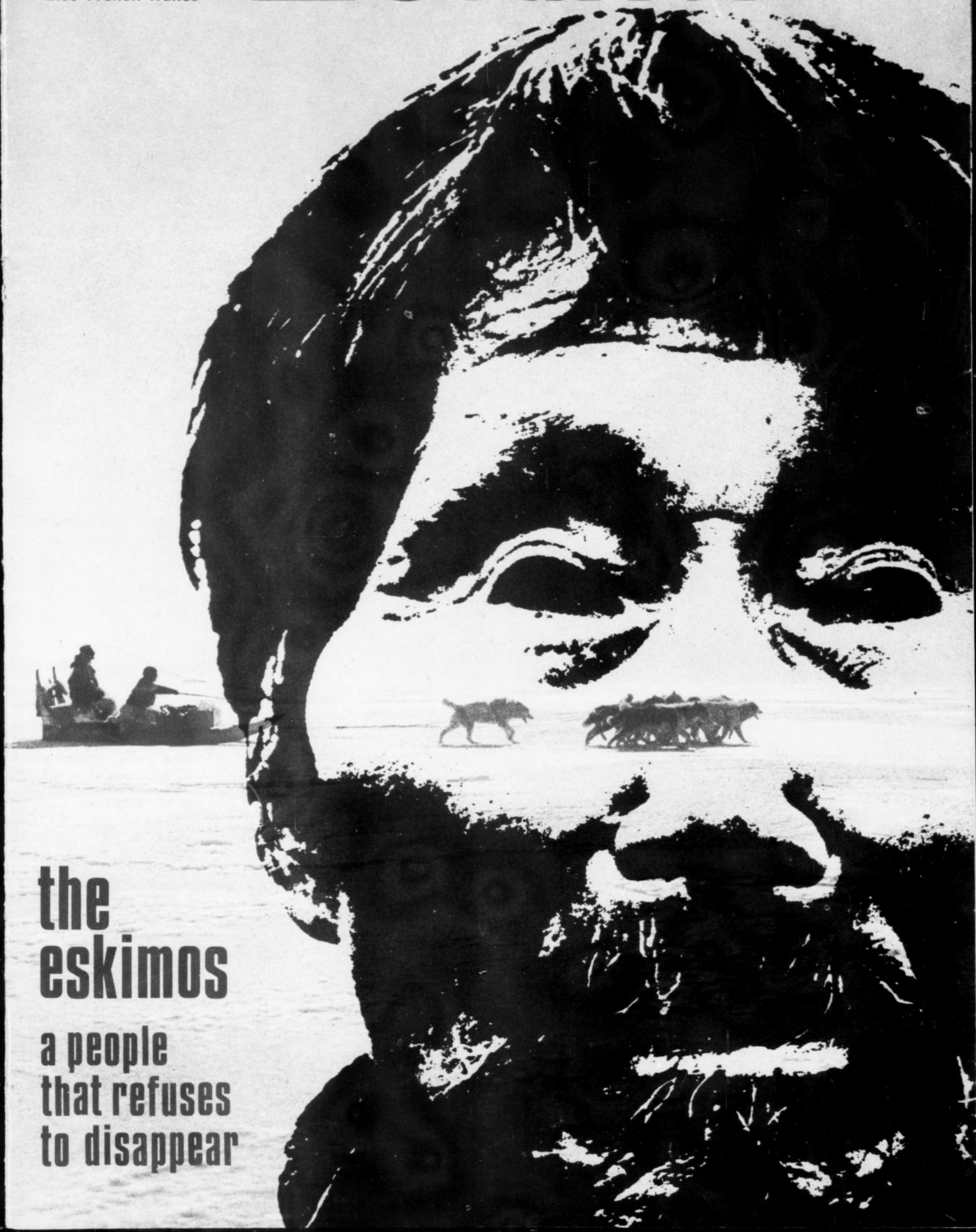
The UNESCO Courier

A window open on the world



the eskimos

a people that refuses to disappear

TREASURES
OF
WORLD ART

95

EGYPT

Queen Nefertiti

1975 has been proclaimed "International Women's Year" by the United Nations. Throughout the year, the "Unesco Courier" will devote its "Treasures of World Art" page each month to works of art depicting women. Here we show a famous portrait bust of Queen Nefertiti (50 cms. high) wrought in limestone 34 centuries ago. It was discovered in the workshop of an Egyptian sculptor among the vestiges of the ancient city of Akhetaton, today called Tell el-Amarna (Upper Egypt), some 300 km from Cairo. Nefertiti was the wife of the pharaoh Akhenaton, or Amenhotep IV, founder of Akhetaton. This bust from the hand of a great master is today in Berlin's Staatliche Museen.

Photo Chris Marker © Snark International, Paris

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4 THE ESKIMOS : A PEOPLE THAT REFUSES TO DISAPPEAR
A far-reaching debate on human rights in the Far North

12 THE CHANGING CANADIAN ESKIMO
" The development of the North is a historical process that cannot be reversed "
By Alexander Stevenson

14 ESKIMO TRADITIONAL WAYS MUST NOT DIE
The Arctic people face their greatest challenge: how to preserve their identity
By Jean Malaurie

18 'GIVE ME WINTER, GIVE ME HUSKY DOGS...'
Photo report

20 'I WAS BORN 1,000 YEARS AGO... '
Open letter from the chief of the Capilano Indians (Canada)
By Dan George

21 THE PEOPLE OF PAYNE BAY
A textbook for Eskimos by Eskimos from New Quebec

27 INTO THE SOVIET TUNDRA...
...where learning to lasso reindeer is an everyday school subject
By Vladimir I. Vasilyev

34 A STATEMENT ON ISRAEL
By Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco

2 TREASURES OF WORLD ART
Queen Nefertiti (Egypt)

Cover

Montage showing the head of a Greenland Eskimo and a sleigh drawn by huskies gliding across the Arctic snows—an image of the traditional Eskimo way of life, today confronted by modern civilization. Cover design specially executed for the "Unesco Courier" by Unesco graphic artist Rolf Ibach.

Photos © Camera Press, London and © Bonnardel, Aix-en-Provence, France

SPECIAL NOTICE

Many of our readers, particularly those whose subscriptions are served from Paris, have received their November and December 1974 issues of the " Unesco Courier " with some delay.
We very much regret this inconvenience which was due entirely to prolonged strikes in the French postal services.

THE ESKIMOS

A people that refuses to disappear

A far-reaching debate: human rights in the Far North

This issue of the "Unesco Courier" is devoted to the human rights of the Eskimos and the uphill struggle they are waging so as not to vanish as a people. For 2,000 years the Eskimos have lived a nomadic life in the vast Arctic regions. Today the impact of modern civilization and economic development is threatening to destroy their culture, way of life, language, and the traditional structure of their society. At its recent General Conference (October-November 1974), Unesco decided to co-ordinate a programme of Arctic studies to be carried out by experts from various countries and regions such as Canada, the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., and Northern Europe. The programme will take into account "the cultural cohesion of a vast region whose peoples and values... are still largely unknown to the general public".

The article published below presents some of the highlights of a recent symposium on economic development in the Arctic and the future of Eskimo societies. The symposium was held under the chairmanship of Dr Jean Malaurie at an international congress organized by the Foundation of Nordic Studies in France (1). The President of the International Institute of Human Rights, Nobel Peace Prizewinner René Cassin, pointed out at the symposium that "for the first time in their history, the Eskimos themselves—from Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Siberia—[had] been able to meet and discuss problems of common concern."

Text © Copyright

Jacques ROUSSEAU
(Canada)
formerly of the Centre of Northern Studies, Laval University, Quebec
(now deceased)

We have got into the habit of judging everything from the Western viewpoint. History has always been written by whites and for whites. We usually talk about the Europeans discovering Canada. I am about to publish a history of Canada in which it is the Indians who discover the French and the English. We have to try to take in both points of view; the natives are human beings like ourselves and like the whites they change and will continue to change.

My European ancestors—French and English—entered into an undertaking with my Amerindian ancestors—I must admit I am quite a mixture—to respect their rights, to make life easier for them and to help them to develop.

The whites settled in Canada with their own legal system, their own laws, and from the very outset there was this failure of comprehension which still prevails in the Far North. Outsiders move in and take over the land, which belongs in fact if not by law to group, tribe or community.

The concept of private property does not exist among the natives, only that of communal ownership. I have avoided using the term "collective ownership" because the situation is not quite the same as in a country like the Soviet Union, for instance, where a system of collective ownership prevails. Ownership is not individual but concerns the community, and when the individual ceases to be part of the community or leaves it, so his participation in communal ownership ceases as well.

Should these natives have a system of ownership modelled on the white man's system? I myself do not think they should. They should be allowed the right of communal ownership to start with, so that they can organize their own affairs as they see fit on their own territory.

The natives' ownership should therefore extend not only to the little area in which they live but to all the land which provides their only livelihood. The influx of whites from the south into the Far North is now happening on a scale which is gradually becoming a matter for concern. In certain cases, these new arrivals are being granted exclusive hunting and fishing rights on the very lands where the natives depend on hunting and fishing for their livelihood. This is an intolerable situation.

(1) " Le Peuple Esquimau Aujourd'hui et Demain " (The Eskimo People Today and Tomorrow) 4th International Congress of the French Foundation of Nordic Studies, edited with a foreword by Jean Malaurie. Bibliothèque Arctique et Antarctique. Vol. 4. Mouton, Paris - The Hague, 1973, 696 pp. " Développement Economique de l'Arctique et Avenir des Sociétés Esquimaudes " (Economic Development of the Arctic and the Future of Eskimo Societies). Debates of the 4th International Congress of the French Foundation of Nordic Studies, Rouen, 1972, 370 pp.

Jumping across gaps in the ice is a traditional springtime game for Eskimo children, although dogs harnessed to sleds usually need to be enticed to join in the fun.

Photo © Fred Bruemmer, Toronto

DOME SHAPED IGLOO, photo right, takes shape as an Eskimo skilfully lays blocks of firm snow sliced with his long knife. The gap at the top is filled in with a key-block, which holds the beehive-structure together. From inside the igloo the builder cuts a door facing away from the prevailing wind, and a ventilating hole well down the curve of the wall, as seen in igloos of 19th-century snow village on Baffin Island shown below. The igloo today is mainly used as a temporary shelter on hunting trips, but it is part of a traditional way of life which many Eskimos are forsaking for new towns like Holsteinsborg on the west coast of Greenland, far right.

Photo Information Canada, Ottawa

Photo © Dominique Darbois, Paris

Jean FOURNIER

(Canada) Director Territorial and Social Development Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa

The density of population in Canada as a whole is 950 per hundred square miles while in the Northwest Territories it is only 8 per hundred square miles.

This state of affairs, seen in relation to the question of the administration of natural resources, raises the question whether such a small number of citizens, administering such a vast, rich territory, should take the profits from its potential mineral, petroleum and other wealth. The potential is there; although extraction is not on a very large scale, we are convinced that the future possibilities for expansion are considerable.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development operates on the principle that one of its main responsibilities is the redistribution of the national wealth and that it can and should use the rich mineral resources of the Far North of Canada to raise the living standard of the people in the poorer parts of the country, such as the maritime regions and part of the province of Quebec.

It is for reasons of fairness that the Federal Government wishes to maintain its control over the natural resources.

Henning BROENDSTED

(Denmark) Judge of the Greenland High Court, Godthaab, Greenland

One of Greenland's problems is that the country is, officially, an integral part of Denmark, although in Greenland we have our own different rules and laws concerning landed property. We have an old legal tradition whereby land belongs to the State, to the community. No private individual is allowed to buy a plot of land. It is possible to obtain permission to build a house on the land or to sell the house, but the sale of the land on which it is built is not allowed.

Arthur B. YATES

(Canada) Director Northern Policy and Program Planning Branch, Northern Affairs Program, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa

It seems obvious that the legal situation concerning property rights is different in each of the countries with an Eskimo population. Greenland is an extreme case in this respect, with its legislation forbidding private ownership of the land occupied by private individuals. The same applies in the Soviet Union, while we in Canada and the United States have very different legislation.

William L. HENSLEY

(Eskimo, of Alaska, U.S.A.) Executive Director, Alaska State Legislature House of Representatives.

Some Eskimo groups do have land, the reservations administered by the Federal Government of the United States. If the whole territory was made up of reservations under the trusteeship of the Federal Government, the Eskimos would get the benefit from the minerals that may be there or may subsequently be discovered. Unfortunately, most Eskimos have no land which is the property of the village or held under trusteeship as in the case of the reservations. As things stand at present, villagers cannot work either in the mines or the oil producing installations on their territories.

The native population does not, in fact, regard compensation as the ideal solution, particularly cash compensation, which in many cases seems the easiest and quickest way of dealing with Eskimo and Indian groups. They are given money in the hope that this will divert their attention from their real interests, but the Eskimos and Indians are fully aware that Congress has never yet passed any bill actually abolishing their right of ownership.

We have set up a number of regional organizations in Alaska grouping several communities together, such as the

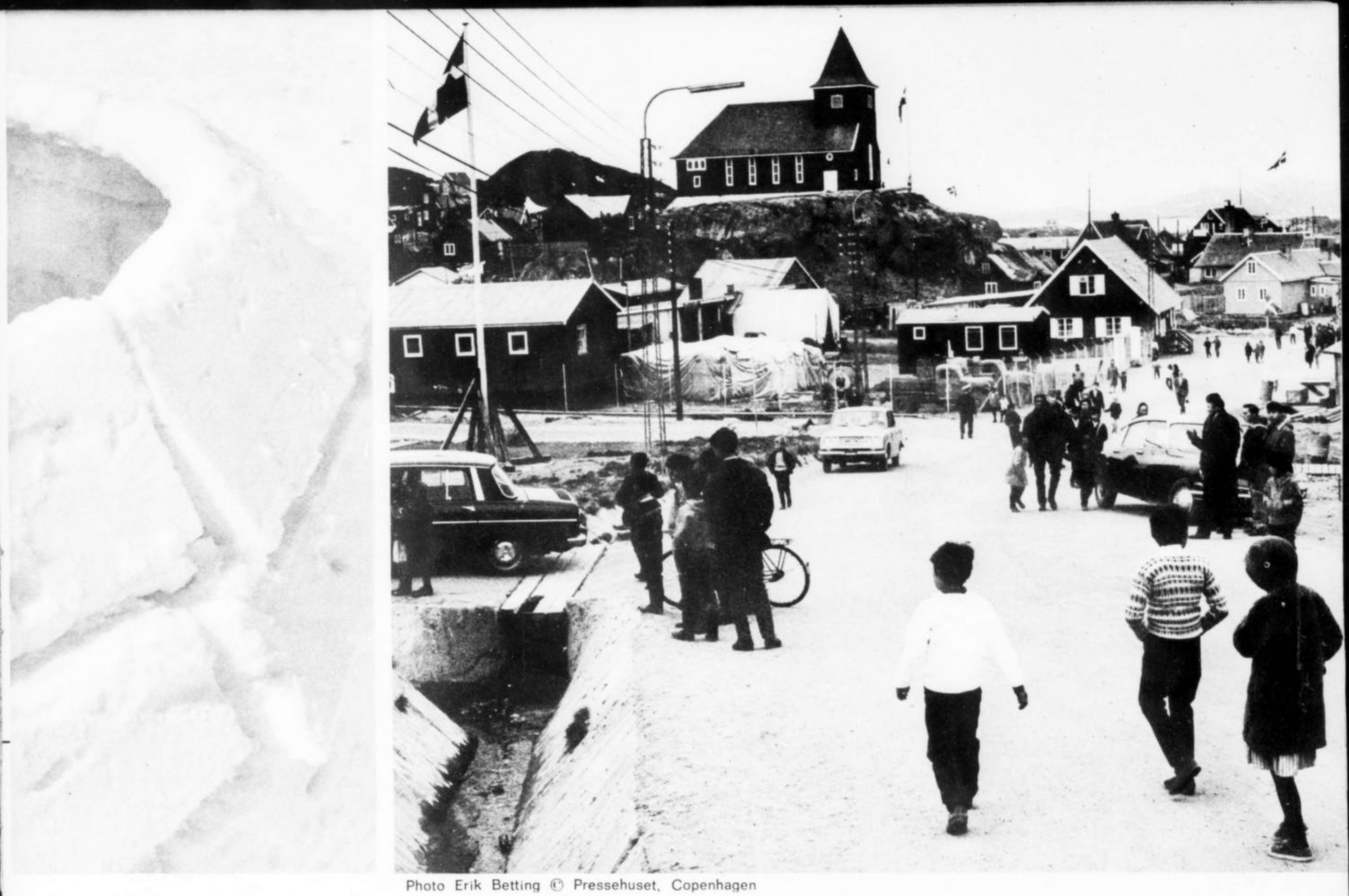

Photo Erik Betting © Pressehuset, Copenhagen

associations for natives living in the mining region of Alaska, in the northwest, etc. There are in fact local organizations of this kind covering the whole State now.

As a result of political pressure by these groups and of intervention by the Secretary of the Interior, one measure has been adopted which is entirely to our satisfaction, an order "freezing" further acquisition of land either by the state or by private individuals.

In any case, the natives who are pressing for a speedy settlement of this problem do not regard this as an exorbitant demand. They have certainly no intention of partitioning the state or stirring up trouble. Considering the living conditions in the villages, we do not think there is anything which runs contrary to the interests of the Federal Government and the State in our claim that the resources of "our country" should be placed at the disposal of the natives so that they can provide for their own economic development in full freedom of action.

Jean MALAURIE

(France)
Director, Centre of Arctic Studies, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris

I should like to ask you to make a leap in space that would take us into those Eskimo communities where hunting is still the main occupation.

Let us put ourselves in the position of these small communities of 300 to 500 persons, isolated in the Far North, impoverished and anxious about their future. They owe their survival and their continuity solely to their intelligence, their sense of organization and, in the last three generations, to our pricing policies. Proud of having shrewdly overcome the rigours of the climate over the centuries, they feel, whatever others might think, that these now-coveted territories, frozen and snowbound, are theirs by absolute right.

But what kind of future can there be for hunting communities in this day and age? We know it will depend largely on the practical measures that local authorities and governments will take.

Claus BORNEMANN

(Denmark)
Head of the Secretariat, Ministry for Greenland, Copenhagen

As far as Greenland is concerned, some reports give the impression that it is official policy to remove hunters from their areas and transfer them into cities. This is incorrect, although in the fishing districts, small groups are indeed migrating towards urban centres.

But in the hunting districts the government would like to see the scattered settlements maintained, especially in areas where seals abound. The authorities try to encourage this by granting housing loans to small communities and setting up building enterprises in these areas. Hunters are also given loans for the purchase of motor-boats.

In the schools children who will one day be hunters receive some instruction in hunting. But I agree that schools in hunting districts are providing above all a formal, not a practical, education.

I should like to know whether scientists can carry out an enquiry to determine in realistic terms whether a district is overpopulated or not. I should also like to know if biologists have assessed the possibilities and the cost of subsidizing hunting.

Some reports I have read claim that an archaic society which comes in contact with industrial civilization is inevitably doomed. What are the grounds for saying so? Does this mean that hunting as a modern industry is doomed?

I go along with Mr. Malaurie when he says that school is the key factor in hunting communities for I feel that, whatever the school, its impact will be negative. Shouldn't people be told and taught about what is happening in the modern world? I think hunting is a very tough way of making a living, and even if many Eskimos enjoy it, the younger ones who have been through school will probably, sooner or later, want to get out of these places where the only prospect is hunting. ▶

Arthur B. YATES

Mr. Bornemann asked whether surveys have been made to find out how far these hunting districts could meet the population's requirements. I can tell you such studies have been carried out in Northern Canada and that they have shown that the resources are barely sufficient to meet the present population's needs, and hence, will be even more deficient, in relation to the needs of the future population.

Mr. Bornemann's second point raised the question of setting up schools for hunters. That's another problem with which we in Canada are greatly concerned. Most of the Eskimos do want hunting techniques to be incorporated in school programmes; but that's a tricky thing to arrange, because of the difficulty of obtaining teachers capable of giving that sort of technical instruction and the problem of limited budgets.

Jacques ROUSSEAU

Whether we like it or not, there'll always be hunting, though admittedly it may now be declining. This is bound to happen with the appearance of synthetic and ranch-bred furs. Fur-farming is a profitable business and a white monopoly today, though I don't see why the north's traditional hunters should not take it up themselves!

The north produces luxury furs; if fur-farming caught on in the north, the native peoples would put a luxury fur on the market. In fact, fur-farming must be treated as an extension of hunting, though fur-bearing animals will continue to be hunted, even if only by a minority.

There is no magic solution for the American Indians any more than there is for the white man. No territory can survive by marketing a single product.

There are all kinds of stock-farming. I should like to show you an example of what may be done with the musk-ox. Here's a sweater made of musk-ox wool; it's the first ever of its kind made in the Province of Quebec. It's a very light wool, a half or a third as light as sheep's wool. This sweater is made of thick-knit wool, but this same wool can be used to produce a cashmere as fine as any in the world.

Alaska already has a musk-ox wool industry, and Quebec is shortly to have one too; it is a highly profitable product.

Trevor LLOYD

(Canada)
Director, Centre for Northern Studies and Research, McGill University, Montreal

I personally doubt whether there are any sound economic grounds for claiming that a good proportion of the Arctic population of Canada, Alaska or Greenland could—I am not saying should—live off hunting and fishing, even if these activities were modernized. I know something about the musk-ox business, and I don't think anybody would question the quality of sweaters made of musk-ox wool.

But I have real doubts about the future of proposals for breeding musk-oxen on a domestic scale. This was first considered for Canada's northern districts, then in Alaska and now in New Quebec. Such ideas are to my mind more glamorous than practical or economically feasible. There was talk a number of years ago about raising certain varieties of sheep in the north; all kinds of uses were to be made of them, and in the most unexpected places.

The author of one study had worked for some time in Iceland and in southern Greenland. The concepts were attractive enough but do not stand up in the face of actual conditions. There is a long-established sheep raising

TOUGH AS NEW BOOTS

Below, Eskimo woman chews on a piece of sealskin, to soften it for use as the sole of a waterproof boot, ingeniously sewn so that the needle never completely pierces the skin. Eskimo women need to be skilled needlewomen; faulty clothing could lead to their menfolk dying of exposure. Right, Eskimo hunter and family from Thule, Greenland, where the pack ice usually begins to break up only in late July, cross a stretch of open water using an ice-floe as a raft.

Photos Bryan Alexander © Camera Press, London

industry in southern Greenland, but extending it has proved quite impossible. There were some catastrophic failures. Even were some of the plans to prove practicable on a limited scale, they could only have minimal effect on the daily lives of the Greenlanders—even as sources of food.

We are agreed that every effort must be made to protect the traditional life-style of those who wish to continue in it. But today many Eskimo children in Canada are going to high school. Let us hope they go on to higher education later. It would be absurd to expect these young people on leaving school to be able to earn a living from traditional Eskimo occupations of their grandfathers.

William L. HENSLEY

The Alaskan Eskimos have had to adapt to a variety of trades to survive, for it is not possible to live entirely off hunting and fishing. Additional activities must therefore be found, and the Eskimos must learn other skills.

To understand the problems of the Alaskan Eskimos, as distinct from those of the Greenland or Canadian Eskimos, Alaska's geography must be taken into consideration. Most of the Eskimos live in some 200 villages scattered throughout the western and eastern parts of the State and located fairly close to heavily populated urban centres. This is not the case in Canada and Greenland.

Even if men are working at various trades, either in their own villages, or in larger urban centres and in cities, they must not give up hunting, for they love it. Even those who work in new industries like petroleum, when they return to their villages after spending three weeks or so in an oil-drilling camp, can indulge in a fortnight of hunting and fishing.

There is still plenty of game in Alaska, even though the question today is what proportion of the population can live off it. I know that in the past—before the white man settled down in Alaska—there was a big wildlife population. White civilization has resulted in urban centres springing up around schools and churches and has had repercussions on the state's basic ecological resources.

We still have sleds drawn by huskies, but tracked power sleds are beginning to supplant them nearly everywhere. And so we must ask ourselves whether the Eskimo who is doing a regular job in town can afford to be a hunter as well.

Even with plenty of jobs paying reasonable wages, the fact remains—as Mr. Malaurie has pointed out—that the Eskimo workers' basic food, their staple diet, comes from hunting. We still hunt whales at Point Barrow, and, even though this is not highly commercialized as it is meant primarily to meet local demand, whaleskins, for us, are an extremely valuable commodity. ▶

Then, of course, there is reindeer-breeding, which is closed to the white man by U.S. federal laws which prevent him from owning reindeer. Herds of these animals—about 60,000 head owned by Eskimo herdsmen—are to be found only in the north-western and peninsular parts of Alaska.

Reindeer breeding has an excellent industrial potential for the future but, unfortunately, the State of Alaska is today planning to take over this activity.

We Eskimos get the impression that the idea is to take away from us an industry we could develop quite well ourselves! The Japanese, who are already buying reindeer antlers which they make into a powder, have shown a keen interest in purchasing reindeer meat.

We have musk-oxen, too, though at the present time this activity is still only in its early stages. The transplantation of musk-oxen to parts of northern Alaska is a very promising development.

Angmalortok OLSEN

(Eskimo, of Greenland, Denmark) Chairman, Greenlanders Society, Copenhagen

I was very glad to hear that hunting, as an industry, can be modernized. Oddly enough, though, it is considered today in Greenland —by both the Danish Government and the Greenlanders themselves— as an occupation for backward peoples.

I feel hunting ought to be regarded as a modern and creative activity. It provides more than half the food requirements of the hunting communities and, depending on market prices, ensures fairly high incomes. There is an assured market for wild fox furs but it is up to us to improve the quality of the species in order to become competitive in this market. So far nothing of the sort has been done.

Looking at Greenland as a whole, we need to examine ways and means of dovetailing this hunting micro-economy into the full range of Greenlandic activities. We cannot afford to overlook any resource that may help to reduce Greenland's increasingly heavy burden of consumer imports.

Our goal must be to produce and to diversify our production. Furs should be exported and the meat of marine mammals sold all over Greenland, with the hunting districts sending their produce to the game-poor south.

Another aspect of the problem is that of increasing the value of products before exporting them so as to obtain the best possible return. Greenland regularly exports furs and pelts, but curiously enough has no tanning industry. This could become a new industry depending wholly on the produce of local hunting.

I should also like to speak of the cultural aspects of hunting. None of you may think there is any relationship between the economy and culture where hunting is concerned. I personally maintain that there is a very close link.

If Greenlanders are to remain a proud people and continue to be themselves, then they must accept their real national identity, based on the centuries-old Eskimo culture, which is so closely bound up with hunting activities. We should also adopt a modern and forward-looking attitude and make every effort to guarantee the continuity of hunting as an occupation in its own right and, at least in the beginning, as the framework for a national identity.

We could go on talking about economics for ever. But if we fail to provide the conditions to enable the Eskimos of Greenland, Alaska and Canada to take pride in their national identity and culture and assert themselves as a people in their own right, then I am afraid all the wonderful economic plans made for them will turn out to be mere operations for propping up the economy of a deprived people who will be regarded with something like mockery.

The close link existing between the economy and the way people feel about their work is well known. This, in fact, is what motivation is all about. There is also a very close relationship between motivation and the economy.

I myself was born in Thule, in Greenland, in a hunting area. My father became one of the best hunters in the area. Both he and my mother used to say it was by coming in contact with the Thule hunters, who have remained so close to their natural culture, that they discovered the best in human nature, as well as the most combative, the most constructive and the most independent men. So I feel

SEA-BORNE SAFARI

Walrus hunting is a hazardous enterprise, calling for great skill and teamwork, since adult males, weighing over a ton, react violently if wounded. Not a scrap of the mammal is wasted. Reserves of walrus meat and blubber are hidden in caches beneath rocks for use during the long winter months. The ivory tusks are sold or carved. Thick walrus hide covers the open boat, the umiak, of these Alaskan Eskimos shown right. Once the boat in which women and children moved between hunting areas, in the Arctic the umiak is now chiefly used by Bering Strait Eskimos and east coast Greenlanders.

Photo Bernier © Atlas Photo, Paris

strongly that there is a very intimate tie binding men, the culture in which they live and the economic conditions of their lives as a whole.

Lars CHEMNITZ

(Eskimo, of Greenland, Denmark)

Chairman of the Provincial Council of Greenland

I spent two years in Thule as a teacher—running a school. I often asked myself whether we should not instruct young children in hunting techniques rather than imparting rudimentary knowledge.

But having thought it over carefully, and having left Thule, I began to see Greenland as a whole and realized that the policy followed in Thule today reflects the aspirations of the Eskimos living there: they want to be integrated into Greenland society.

Foxes, once the Eskimo hunter's staple, have declined considerably, whereas the human population in these regions has risen. At Angmagssalik, for example, it would be wrong to disperse the hunters, but it may soon become necessary to cut back hunting expeditions gradually as reserves of foxes and other wildlife will not be adequate. A similar situation prevails in other parts of Greenland.

It has to be accepted then that people who can no longer hunt must be steered into other activities.

Jean MALAURIE

I must object once again to the assertions made by the Canadian and Greenland authorities that wildlife stocks in the present hunting areas are insufficient to meet the needs of today's hunting communities and that this shortage will be felt in the foreseeable future (in one or two generations).

As regards foxes, Thule has always been, and still is, one of the world's best-stocked areas. The potential is still vast. There are 100 hunters in Thule; the territory is as big as 20 French departments, and it can be easily extended for seal-hunting ten times further in the north-west, which is at present uninhabited.

If there has been a drop in the turnover of fox skins, it is due to market price levels, and has nothing to do with biogenetic causes.

No published findings of any properly conducted biogenetic and social and economic survey exist to support a biogenetic explanation of this drop, and I am not saying this lightly. It would be surprising if there were, considering the vastness of territories that all kinds of modern means place at the disposal of a relatively small hunting population (5,000 hunters operating all year round in the vast American and Green'and Arctic). What's more, hunting must be seen as a modern and highly mobile occupation.

I fear that after the departure of the discouraged Eskimos, white industrialists may exploit these hunting grounds for themselves. And I should be surprised if they fail to obtain the assistance and financial backing which the native people lack today.

The Arctic is vast, and biologically almost unexplored. It would be astonishing indeed if so limited an Eskimo population—80,000 in all, less all those who may not want to, or cannot, remain in the north—failed to obtain the economic and administrative independence they need for pursuing modern occupations. Because of its oil, natural gas and minerals, the American and Siberian Arctic promises to be one of the regions with the highest per capita income in the world. A bold territorial policy would surely enable native communities to finance their own development. ■

Photo Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris

THE CHANGING CANADIAN ESKIMO

by Alexander Stevenson

Photo J.-Ph. Charbonnier © *Réalités*, Paris

'The development of the North is a historical process that cannot be reversed'

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THE traditional home of the Canadian Eskimos is over 2.6 million square kilometres of Arctic Canada. They have occupied this area since many centuries before Christ, wresting a precarious living from a harsh land where only a hardy and intelligent race could survive. Today about 15,000 live in Canada, mainly in coastal settlements of 200 to 500 people, scattered along many thousands of miles of the Arctic mainland and archipelago.

It is generally agreed by anthropologists that the ancestors of the first northern Indians and Eskimos migrated from Asia across the Bering Strait or over an isthmus which might have joined Asia and America much farther back in time. They came as primitive hunters seeking game without realizing that they had crossed into another continent.

Over the centuries there were a series of migrations; probably the earliest was of Indian people who almost never settled north of the tree-line. When the land bridge became covered with water 11,000 years ago, new arrivals could have crossed at the nearest points of headlands between the continents. The short distance is 90 km. of open or frozen channel across the Bering Strait to Alaska from the Asian side.

The sub-Arctic may have been inhabited for up to 40,000 years, but the bleak Arctic tundra where the average temperature for the warmest part of the year is less than 50°F. seems to have had a shorter human past. Recent findings in Alaska, known as the Denbigh Flint complex, contain artifacts and evidence indicating this culture goes back to 3500 B.C. and it is generally accepted as the primary source from which Eskimo culture developed.

If the ancestors of the present-day Canadian Eskimos arrived in North America over 5,000 years ago, they had spread across 8,000 km. of winding coast from Siberia to Greenland by 1000 A.D. This is about the same time that, according to the early Norse sagas, the Vikings sailed from Greenland across Davis Strait to Baffin Island. There they saw or met people called Skraelings—a Norse word which seems to describe both Indians and Eskimos. When the Norse withdrew, a gap of centuries passed before explorers and adventurers again visited the stark, silent shores of Arctic Canada.

It is difficult to generalize about Eskimos as a whole because there are significant regional differences between groups. Generally speaking, the great majority were coastal dwellers and most of their food, fuel and clothing was obtained from the sea in the form of walrus, whales, seals.

Land animals such as the caribou and musk ox also contributed to their way of life. Many generations never

CONTINUED PAGE 30

ALEXANDER STEVENSON, *of Canada, is director of the Social Development Division of Canada's Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Since last year he has been directing a commission of inquiry into the Eskimo language for Canada's National Eskimo Association, and since 1969 he has headed the consultative committee for the preservation of the historic heritage of the Far North. The author has written a more extensive study of the Canadian Eskimos today, published in "The Eskimo People Today and Tomorrow", Mouton and Co., Paris and The Hague, 1973.*

ESKIMO HOMELAND

The Eskimos live on the northern edge of the world, occupying a huge area stretching from eastern Siberia to Greenland and covering thousands of kilometres of coastline. Altogether there are some 80,000 Eskimos spread over four territories: Greenland (Denmark) has around 38,000; Alaska (U.S.A.) is the home of about 24,000 Eskimos; in Canada they number almost 15,000 and in Siberia (U.S.S.R.) less than 3,000. At left, an Eskimo couple in Alaska.

Photo Charles Lenars © Atlas Photo, Paris

ESKIMO TRADITIONAL WAYS MUST NOT DIE

Victors for thousands of years over a harsh environment, the Eskimos today face their greatest challenge: how to preserve their identity

by Jean Malaurie

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JEAN MALAURIE, *French geographer and explorer, is professor of Arctic anthropology and geomorphology at the University of Paris and professor of Arctic geography at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, where he is also director of the Centre of Arctic Studies. Secretary-General of the French Foundation of Nordic Studies, he is the author of over 150 scientific studies. In 1970 he produced and directed a film version of his best-selling book on the life and present-day problems of the Greenland Eskimos, "The Last Kings of Thule" (Crowell New York, 1956), translated into 15 languages. His "Les Civilisations Esquimaudes" (Eskimo civilizations) was published last year, and his work, "Anthropogéographie Esquimaude" (Eskimo anthropogeography), will appear shortly (Plon Paris). In 1974, the French radio and TV commissioned Jean Malaurie to make three films on "The Eskimos Face their Destiny" in co-operation with native organizations and the authorities of Alaska, Canada, Greenland and Siberia. Shooting on location has been completed in Alaska and Canada and is under way in Greenland and Siberia.*

IN America it is expected that the last autonomous groups of native hunters in the Arctic will disintegrate if not totally disappear within the next 20 years. The total assimilation of the native peoples of the North American Arctic and sub-Arctic during this period is, however, quite impossible.

But the decline, already dating back some years and the cause of serious unrest, will only be hastened by current mineral and oil prospecting in northern Alaska (Prudhoe Bay) and northern Canada, and plans to speed up the development of Greenland's codfishing industry.

Is the object to incorporate these societies in the West's market-oriented production system and turn them, as far as their limited local hunting and fishing resources allow, into consumer societies? Or is it felt that the comprehensive development of these under-developed regions presupposes a respect for local cultures which form part of our global civilization and without which the world would be so much the poorer?

Not long ago Unesco defined this complex notion of "development" as "any process aiming to create the conditions of a given society's economic and social progress with the help of that society's active participation and, if possible, at its own request."

The French economist Daniel Nat has made the following excellent ana-

MODERN LIFE PLAYS HAVOC WITH ESKIMO EYES AND TEETH. Eskimos' eyes are very well adapted to the Arctic climate. The eye fissure is extremely narrow (photo left), and to protect themselves against snow blindness Eskimos wear goggles carved of wood, bone, ivory or other materials which admit light through a narrow slit (below). But changes in diet brought about by contact with modern civilization have had deleterious effects on many Eskimos' eyesight. When they lived in natural conditions on a high-protein diet, the Eskimos enjoyed good eyesight, often spending long periods on close work in poor light. Dr Elizabeth Cass, of the Department of National Health and Welfare, Ottawa, studied the eyesight of groups of Canadian Eskimos and discovered that when Eskimo children moved to townships or settlements where they ate starchy foods, poor in proteins, they began to develop myopia. Starchy diets have also been found to ravage the teeth of many young Eskimos, even resulting in the total loss of teeth at adolescence and digestive disorders.

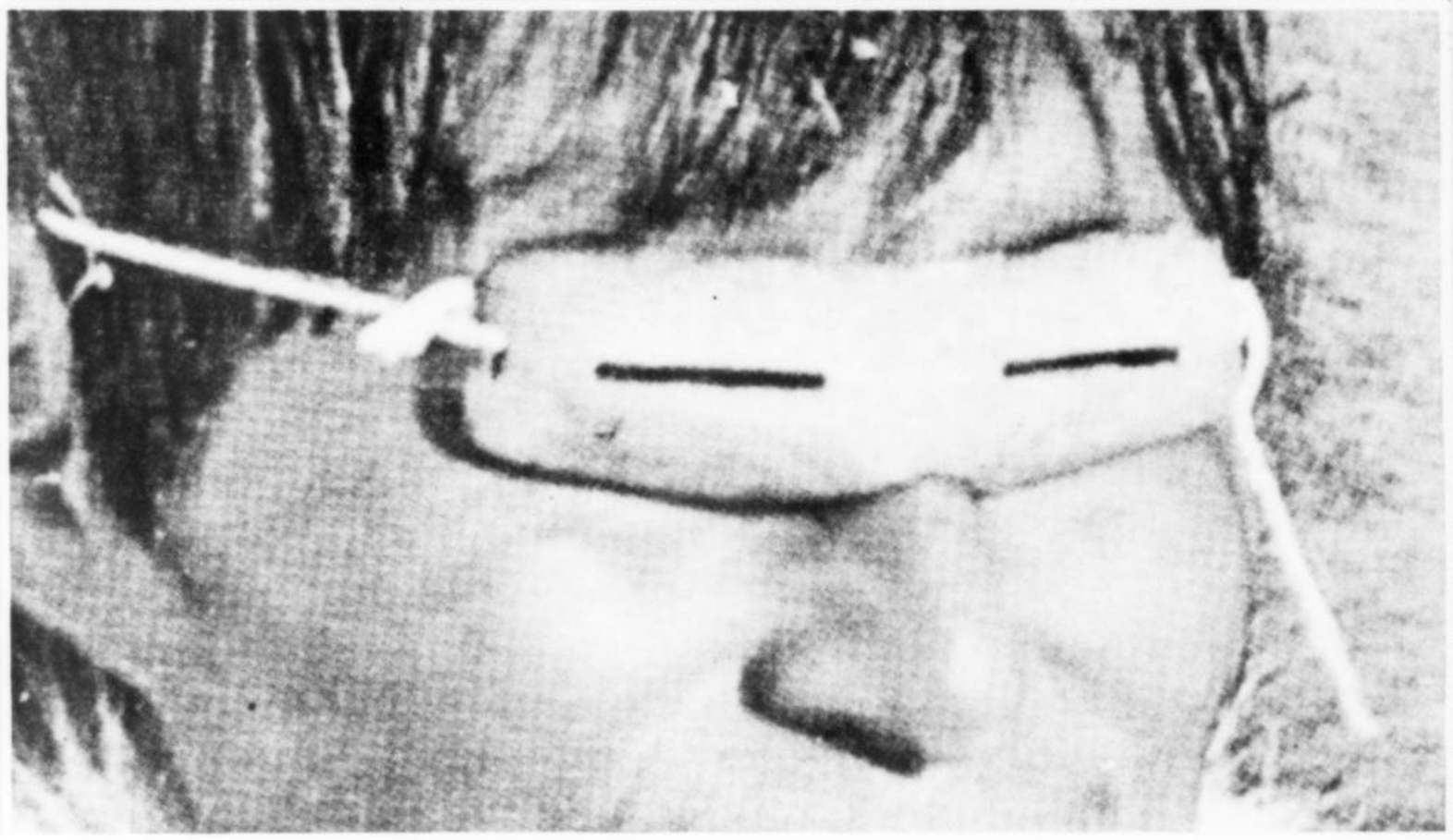


Photo © Jean Malaurie, Paris

lysis of these points of view: "Either we consider that a culture is sovereign and unique and that the material and cultural elements which comprise it are indivisible; or we consider that underdevelopment englobes all aspects of society... A people's underdevelopment then becomes, and this is the commonest attitude, a sign of inferiority, a sickness inherited from the past."

The white man's first contacts with the Eskimos in the 18th century were sometimes violent. Quite soon, however, the native peoples put up only a passive resistance, while trying to absorb into their culture everything practical and useful the white man could offer them.

In reality, this superficial passiveness showed the immense pragmatism of this impoverished people, their age-old patience and their unshakeable confidence in their destiny. Economists have frequently misinterpreted the Eskimo's mask-like smile. It has been seen as a sign of eagerness to receive aid or become assimilated, whereas it was a manifestation, at least until recently, of a desire to co-operate in a spirit of self respect and dignity.

Given this state of incomprehension between the agents of the dominant society and the native peoples, it is hardly surprising that some quite absurd situations have arisen.

It has actually been suggested that the inhabitants of Canada's District of Keewatin and Southampton Island (in the Hudson Bay) should grow lettuce or eat canned fish, that a timber industry should be developed in a treeless tundra, and that workshops manufacturing felt for hats should be set up in Cambridge Bay.

Boarding schools in northern Greenland provide no instruction in modern hunting methods for the sons of trappers. With local facilities offering, for the moment, no prospect of jobs other than those they have done for centuries, one wonders what kind of future these children are being educated for. In the words of one observer, the progressive school conceived according to the assimilative ideas of the white man will end up by killing development.

Is it surprising then that the native peoples, long uncomplaining, are beginning to grumble about the white man's inconsistencies? "Send us back to our lands...", they say. "If we stay here too long we shall have lost even the will to live." This at any rate was the gist of what Garry Lake Eskimos, in Canada's District of Keewatin, told government researchers in 1962.

The missionary will probably say that the Eskimo should be converted and turned into a church-goer. The teacher will argue that everybody, white or Eskimo, should be given equal opportunities. He will tell Eskimo children that they should learn English or Danish, for every white man is secretly convinced that bilingualism will release these people from the straitjacket of their traditions, centred on the family with its intricately woven texture of kinship and its web of rules. For planners, the Eskimo needs education, training in the white man's system and a sense of responsibility.

If current trends are not checked, whole areas of the Arctic which have been populated for centuries will soon be deserted. Idle and bitter, the Eskimos will drift into a few big towns without an economic future—places like Fairbanks, Anchorage, Nome and Kotzebue in Alaska ; Fort Chimo, Rankin Inlet and Frobisher in Canada; and Godthaab, Godhavn, Angmagssalik and Thule-Kranak in Greenland. Unrest will grow among these unemployed minorities and they will become increasingly difficult to assimilate.

The deserted plateaux of Keewatin and New Quebec, considered too poor in game for Eskimo hunters, will become a playground for millionaires from southern Canada and the United States. This is already happening. White tourists on hunting and salmon-fishing trips are beginning to take the place of the Eskimo, whose status has been reduced to that of guide. Who knows, the demand for local colour may soon lead to the building of Eskimo villages as tourist attractions.

The governments exercising trusteeship over these peoples are no longer convinced that hunting is an economically viable activity, although some relatively impressive results have been achieved. Greenland still applies a policy of guaranteed minimum prices to ▶

Photo Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris

Snowmobiles, above, are one of many modern innovations in the Far North. These motor-driven snow scooters mounted on a caterpillar track are widely used nowadays in parts of the Arctic, but in sub-zero temperatures breakdowns are frequent and many Eskimos consider that dogs are more reliable for extended hunting expeditions.

its hunting communities in the northwest and on the east coast, but neither Canada nor Alaska subsidize this vital activity of their Eskimo population.

This refusal to organize an economy based on contracts is a measure of the mistrust in which the native peoples are held. The government reaction is: "What future can they have as Eskimos and hunters? Let's civilize them first; then we'll see."

And yet hunting has brought excellent returns. In its time it has made a fortune for powerful firms like the Hudson's Bay Company, and together with other occupations like fishing and reindeer rearing, it has been organized on rational modern lines and still provides a good income for the inhabitants of the U.S.S.R.'s Chukotka region and the autonomous districts of northern Siberia.

To be profitable, a hunting economy requires certain specific conditions.

The first requirement is that the area should be biologically rich. Secondly, the hunting community itself must be tightly-knit if the operation is to be soundly managed. Thirdly, and this is especially true today, hunting must be organized on industrial lines. If the second two conditions are not met, and if the native society is not protected against itself, even the richest hunting area will only support an impoverished community.

Before the Danish State took over full responsibility for the District of Thule, this territory provided its Administrator (at the time, Knud Rasmussen) and his staff with a relatively high annual revenue.

The extraordinary cohesiveness of the Thule community was successfully preserved by Knud Rasmussen. As early as 1923, he gave the community a political form, through a series of new laws based on old customs. A "Hunters' Council" with limited powers but foreshadowing tomorrow's Eskimo government, was set up to administer the territory. Proud of their privileges, the people felt that they were working for themselves. Living in relative isolation, the community was also protected from outside diseases and had no chance to eat unsuitable foods.

After Knud Rasmussen's death, and especially since 1936, the administrative district of Thule was gradually incorporated into the rest of Greenland, with the result that this model group of Eskimos lost its uniqueness and its privileges.

Since 1950 this decline has followed a classic course, with the break-up of the family as a unit of life and production (one woman in four now does not marry, but instead bears children to a number of men); abortions; a growing indifference to group interests; a weakening of leadership.

Young people are giving up the kayak, since they are not taught how to handle kayaks at school and are afraid of sailing them. Marksmanship is getting worse; the Eskimos are settling down more and hunting less. They are increasingly dependent on manufactured gadgets, investing less in production, and their traditional codes are falling into disuse.

Some Eskimos are leaving their communities, and educated Eskimos, scarcely representative of the community's confused aspirations, are betraying their origins and seeking rapid assimilation into white society. Drunkenness and tooth decay are on the increase (few Eskimos do not need dentures by the age of 40). They are increasingly subject to eye disorders and their resistance to cold has diminished as a result of unsuitable foods (flour, jam, sugar, etc.).

This moral crisis and physiological weakening have reduced productivity. Once a creditor society, the District of Thule is now heavily in debt. This is particularly alarming because of the presence of a big military base at Dundas-Thule.

Drawn by the garbage, large numbers of foxes, prized by the hunters, converge on the base (which is out of bounds to Eskimos), with the result that the rest of the region is depleted. The base is also a permanent reminder to the hunters of their impoverishment, for an unskilled Danish or American worker there makes four times more than an experienced Eskimo hunter.

The Thule Air Base at Dundas has thus become a symbol to the Eskimos, prompting them to ask questions about

the meaning of the historic segregation which they discover there. "It's too late," Eskimo hunters of the region told me again and again in the spring of 1969. "The young are increasingly at odds with their elders and lack confidence in themselves. They no longer know what they are and some of them are likely to quit the land in the near future . . . It is the cleverest, those who have done best at school, who will go away. Our hunting economy, which depends on team effort, will be disrupted and further impoverished.

"The schools cream off the best of our hunters. As technicians, they will only find work away from our territory, in the south, which is in some ways a foreign country to them. The less intelligent ones will stay with us. They don't learn how to handle a kayak at boarding school, which also robs them of the opportunity to get day-in day-out instruction in hunting from their fathers. And so they won't be such good hunters. They won't be able to make a living from hunting.

"We only go out hunting regularly because we love our dogs and have to feed them. And yet hunting is our real life, our natural source of satisfaction as men. In the south don't they know that we don't live to 'produce', but to be ourselves, living together according to our customs?

"We Eskimos don't even own the land on which we have been living for centuries. What will it be like when oil is found beneath our soil? Whose will it be?"

It is easy enough to criticize, but these deplorable facts are convincing proof that it is basic principles that must be re-examined, not remedies which are likely to turn out to be mere palliatives. The Thule hunters are in fact saying what Jean-Jacques Rousseau observed two centuries ago: "The slightest change in customs, even if it has certain advantages, always turns out to the detriment of morals." Rousseau went on to add, with a wisdom close to that of the Eskimo, "For customs are a people's morality. The moment it ceases to respect them, there is no rule but its passions, no brake but laws."

The questions that arise today need to be framed in the context of the general problem of relations between co-existing cultures.

On this subject, an editorial which appeared in the review *Inter-Nord* in March 1968 had this to say:

"Until now these relations have usually been defined by outright conquest, latent colonization, enforced integration and by the anthropological annihilation of the weakest. The question now is whether the modern relationship patterns worked out in the American Arctic in recent years are radically different from previous attitudes, and whether they can eliminate the old ways of thinking, so long as it is not clearly and expressly recognized that all cultures are equally valid, and so long as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not reinforced by a universal declaration of the rights of societies as they are and as they hope to be."

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights clearly indicates in Article I that "All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

Article 11 of the Convention concerning the protection and integration of indigenous and other tribal populations, adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organization in 1957, is quite explicit: "The right of ownership, collective or individual, of the members of the populations concerned over the lands which these populations traditionally occupy shall be recognized."

The Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Pierre Trudeau, has written that in view of Canada's "polyethnic" character, "the different regions within the country must be assured of a wide range of local autonomy, such that each national group, with an increasing background of experience in self-government, may be able to develop the body of laws and institutions essential to full expression and development of its national characteristics."

One could wrangle endlessly over the meaning of the word *national*, but it cannot be denied that the Eskimos and the Indians are ethnic groups with a national vocation. There was, one may recall, a confederation of Five Iroquois Nations in the 18th century.

Since 1951, administrative changes have been taking place in Greenland, and today the Greenland Council, the "Landsraad", is administratively autonomous within the Danish State. The changes reflect a trend towards an increasingly autonomous system.

What kind of development is being sought in these regions? Is the aim to create an economy governed solely by market prices, flying in the face of any resistance on social or historical grounds, or to guarantee these minority peoples a future within the context of a policy of overall development?

As long as there is no well-defined integrated policy of getting the native people to develop the tundra for their own use by their own efforts (as in the U.S.S.R. and Sweden) so that prices paid to hunters and fishermen are guaranteed at a very high level by royalties from oil and mining industries developed on their territory, there will be a strong temptation to drift into discouragement and pessimism and encourage the derelicts of Arctic societies to emigrate south or to the growing mining industries in the north.

An active, vigorous society is also a productive society. By turning to the Arctic seas (fisheries, fish breeding, etc.) and the tundra (traditional and modern ways of hunting, raising reindeer and musk oxen) the Eskimos will regain their dignity and their full authority as a community, through doing work which is natural and familiar to them. It is important that the life of the Eskimos as hunters and fishermen—which is a civilization in itself—no longer be a survival from the past but be recognized as a privilege and model for others to follow. This can be brought about through a hunting and fishing production policy, biologically planned and economically guaranteed to provide high remuneration from local oil revenues.

Endowed with substantial financial resources, such a community could become the centre of modern Eskimo life, a true "national home", where those Eskimos who are eager to become involved in the life of the south (mining, public works, service industries) could nevertheless rediscover their cultural identity.

This is no Utopian idea. Already Alaskan Trustees and Corporations are studying revolutionary plans for Eskimo villages. The Eskimo people, we can be sure, still have plenty of surprises in store for us. ■

Jean Malaurie

40 MILLION ACRES FOR NATIVE ALASKANS

On December 18, 1971, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was signed by the President of the United States. This was hailed by the native peoples of Alaska as the beginning of a new era. The Act invested 12 newly created native Alaskan "Corporations" with considerable economic and political power.
The Corporations became the full owners of 40 million acres of land and all its underground resources, which they were free to choose. They also received the sum of $962.5 million from the U.S. Treasury in compensation for relinquishing their historic rights to any other territories in Alaska. On December 18, 1974, the choice of lands by the Corporations was finally completed.
Among the various legal provisions, one specifically authorizes and encourages bilingualism in all regions where the people still speak their native languages.
The Eskimos and Indians of Alaska—representing one-third of the State's population—have displayed outstanding adaptability and political acumen in coping with the difficult legal and economic problems raised by the Settlement Act.
The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act may well provide a model—or indeed a lesson, if some of its provisions turn out to be negative—for any new measures which might be envisaged for Canada as well as Greenland.

Photo J.-Ph. Charbonnier © *Réalités*, Paris

'Give me w
and you c

Photo © Dominique Darbois, Paris

Eskimos have always depended on animals for their survival, and many an Eskimo caught in a blizzard owes his life to the stamina and sense of direction of huskies like the one shown at left, peering through a snowy mask. In good conditions a hard-driven eight-dog team can pull a sled over 100 miles in 24 hours. "Give me winter, give me dogs and you can keep the rest", wrote the great Greenland ethnologist Knud Rasmussen (1879-1933). Trained huskies are invaluable on hunting expeditions, using their keen sense of smell to sniff out seals' breathing holes and polar bears' lairs.

The young bears shown above will not harm the Eskimo children watching them, but hunting the full-grown animals across snow and ice, far right, is perilous. Bear-hunters use huskies to harass their quarry until they can get within shooting range. In the past, in some parts of the Arctic where there were few dogs a man would pursue a bear over long distances on foot, armed only with a harpoon.

Skilled carvers, the Eskimos often depict animals in ivory and stone. The base of this stone carving of a polar bear, right, by Manno, represents the animal's reflection on the ice.

Animal farming as well as hunting is practised in some parts of the Arctic. The forest of antlers seen in this striking light effect, above right, belongs to a reindeer herd on Yamal Peninsula in the Soviet Far North.

Photo © W. Eccles Collection, Toronto, Canada

Photo B. Ushmaikin © APN, Moscow

winter, give me dogs can keep the rest'

Photo © USIS, Paris

Open letter from Chief Dan George of the Capilano Indians

'I was born 1,000 years ago...'

My very good dear friends :

WAS it only yesterday that man sailed around the moon? You and I marvel that men should travel so far and so fast, yet if they have travelled far then I have travelled farther, and if they have travelled fast then I faster, for I was born a thousand years ago, born in a culture of bows and arrows. But within the span of half a lifetime I was flung across the ages to the culture of the atom bomb and from bows and arrows to atom bombs is a distance far beyond the flight to the moon.

I was born in an age that loved the things of nature and gave them beautiful names like "Tessoualouit" instead of dried up names like "Stanley Park". I was born when people loved nature and spoke to it as though it has a soul: I can remember going up Indian river with my father when I was very young. I can remember him watching the sunlight fires on Mount Pé-Né-Né. I can remember him singing his thanks to it as he often did, singing the Indian word "thanks" very very softly.

And the new people came, more and more people came, like a crushing rushing wave they came, hurling the years aside, and suddenly I found myself a young man in the midst of the twentieth century.

I found myself and my people adrift in this new age but not a part of it, engulfed by its rushing tide but only as a captive eddy going round and round. On little reserves and plots of land, we floated in a kind of grey unreality, ashamed of our culture which you ridiculed, unsure of who we were and where we were going, uncertain of our grip on the present, weak in our hope of the future.

I had a glimpse of something better than this for a few brief years. I knew my people when they lived the old life; I knew them when there was still a dignity in their lives and a feeling of worth in their outlook; I knew them when there was unspoken confidence in the home and a certain knowledge of the path they walked upon. But they were living on the dying energy of a dying culture, a culture that was slowly losing its forward thrust.

We did not have time to adjust to the startling upheaval around us; we seem to have lost what we had without a replacement; we did not have time to take our twentieth-century progress and eat it little by little and digest it.

Do you know what it is like to be without moorings? Do you know what it is like to live in surroundings that are ugly? It depresses man, for man must be surrounded by the beautiful if his soul is to grow.

Do you know what it is like to feel you are of no value to society and those around you, to know that people came to help you but not to work with you, for you knew that they knew you had nothing to offer. Do you know what it is like to have your race belittled, and have you been made aware of the fact that you are only a burden to the country? Maybe we did not have the skills to make a meaningful contribution, but no one would wait for us to catch up. We were shrugged aside because we were dumb and could never learn.

What is it like to be without pride in your race? Pride in your family? Pride and confidence in yourself? What is it like? You don't know for you never tasted its bitterness. I shall tell you what it is like. It is like not caring about tomorrow for what does tomorrow matter! It is like having a reserve that looks like a junkyard because the beauty in the soul is dead and why should the soul express an external beauty that does not match it?

And now, you hold out your hand and you beckon to me to come over: "Come and integrate", you say, but how can I come? I am naked and ashamed; how can I come in dignity? I have no presents, I have no gifts. What is there in my culture you value? My poor treasure you can only scorn. Am I then to come as a beggar and receive all from your omnipotent hand?

Somehow, I must wait, I must delay. I must find myself, I must find my treasure. I must wait until you want something of me, until you need something that is me. I can raise my head and say to my wife and family: "Listen, they are calling, they need me, I must go!" Then, I can walk across the street and I will hold my head high for I will meet you as an equal. I will not scorn you for your gifts and you will not receive me in pity. Pity I can do without. My manhood, I cannot do without. I shall not come as a cringing object of your pity! I shall come in dignity or I shall not come at all!

You talk big words of integration in the schools: does it really exist? Can we talk of integration until there is social integration? Until there is integration of hearts and minds you have only a physical presence and the walls are high as the mountain range.

Come with me to the playground of an integrated high school. See how level and flat and ugly the black top is. But look, now it is recess time, the students pour through the doors. Soon, over there, is a group of white students and see, over there, near the fence, a group of native students, and look again, the black is no longer level: mountain ranges rising, valleys falling and a great chasm seems to be opening up between the two groups, yours and mine, and no one seems capable of crossing over. But wait, soon the bell will ring and the students will leave the playground.

Integration has moved indoors. There is not much room in the classroom to dig chasms so there are only little ones there, only little ones for we won't allow big ones, at least not right under our noses.

What do we want? We want first of all to be respected and to feel we are people of worth; we want an equal opportunity to succeed in life. But we cannot succeed on your terms, we cannot raise ourselves on your norms, we need specialized help in education, specialized help in the formative years, special courses in English; we need guidance, counselling; we need equal job opportunities for our graduates. Otherwise our students will lose courage and ask: "Well, what is the use of it all?"

Let no one forget it: we are a people with special rights guaranteed to us by promises and treaties. We do not beg for these rights, nor do we thank you for them because, God help us, the price we paid was exorbitant. We paid for them with our culture, our dignity and our self respect. We paid and paid and paid until we became a beaten race, poverty-stricken and conquered.

I know that in your heart, you wish you could help. I wonder if there is much you can do, and yet there is a lot you can do. When you meet my children, respect each one for what he is: a child and your brother. Maybe it all boils down to just that.

Dan George

This letter from Dan George, chief of the Capilano Indian tribe in British Columbia, Canada, was read to a recent symposium on the economic development of the Arctic and the future of Eskimo societies (see pages 4-11) by a missionary, Father André-Pierre Steinmann. He told the symposium that in his view this eloquent letter could equally well express the feelings of Eskimos in Greenland and Canada. Father Steinmann, of Puvirnituq, New Quebec, has spent over 30 years with the Eskimos and is a pioneer of their cooperative movement.

THE PEOPLE OF PAYNE BAY

The texts and drawings on the following pages are by Eskimo story tellers and artists. The illustrations are not taken from the Eskimo textbook presented here. They have been chosen from (1) a 1975 calendar of prints by Eskimos of Cape Dorset, "On the Land—Cape Dorset 1975", published by the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd., Cape Dorset, North West Territories (2) a catalogue of Eskimo art, "Cape Dorset Prints 1973", also published by the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd., (3) Paul-Emile Victor's "Eskimos, Nomades des Glaces" (Eskimos, Nomads of the Ice) published by Editions Mondo, Lausanne, and Hachette, Paris 1972.

On the following pages the "Unesco Courier" presents passages from a unique and as yet unpublished textbook of Eskimo culture. The chapter from which the extracts are taken is an account of the Eskimo way of life as related by the people of Payne Bay, an Eskimo village of 250 inhabitants on Ungava Bay in New Quebec (Canada). While compiling the book, a Canadian specialist in Eskimo language and culture, Michèle Therrien, spent many hours listening to the village story tellers of Payne Bay recounting for the benefit of their children the folk wisdom and skills which have enabled the Eskimos to survive in a harsh and inhospitable environment.

In the past, Eskimo children lived in close contact with their parents, who were their sole teachers. With the coming of modern civilization and a more settled way of life, many Eskimo children now attend residential schools and are thus separated from the family and its traditional education. For this reason, Eskimos have often asked that special attention be given to the teaching of Eskimo culture in schools.

It was in response to this wish that the School Board of New Quebec asked Michèle Therrien to prepare a textbook in which the Eskimos themselves would share in setting down the basic features of their culture. Madame Therrien is a lecturer at the Centre of Arctic Studies and at the Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations (both in Paris). The textbook is to be published shortly in a trilingual —Eskimo, English, French—edition by the School Board of New Quebec (Quebec Ministry of Education, Canada).

The Eskimos use two systems of writing, one syllabic, the other alphabetic. The letters in syllabic writing above are pronounced "Kangirsumiut" and mean "the people of Payne Bay". Payne Bay (whose Eskimo name is Kangirsuk) is a small village in the Canadian Far North whose inhabitants helped to produce the textbook of Eskimo culture, extracts of which are published here.

The magic owl, copper engraving by Eskimo artist Kenojuak

The way we lived

When we were young, our homes were cold places. My mother used to go off fishing while I stayed behind. When she was nearly home, I could hear the noise she made crossing the snow and at last I would see her emerging from the darkness of the night.

We were very thankful when she brought fish back with her or when my father brought back seal meat. When they were away, I stayed by myself in the cold house.

When I grew up, I went off in search of moss for the fire. I used to bring back great quantities of it. This was how it was until the time came to move into the igloo.

The menfolk used to hunt the walrus. When the hunting had been good, they would bring the sledge (qamuti) laden with meat inside the igloo. The meat used to be cut up immediately after the kill and soon froze on the way back. Thus we would have a supply of good fresh food. We usually ate it raw because the oil lamp (qulliq) cooked things only very slowly.

When we gave up the igloo and moved back into our tent, it felt warm and seemed very light, and life was quiet and peaceful.

Mary Taqulik

How we travelled

Leaving the village, we used to follow the Payne river upstream. Accidents sometimes happened. I remember Sarah Attasi being pulled out of the boat (umiak) by the rope with which the dogs towed the boat along the river bank. The dogs were pulling the boat near to the bank and Sarah was helping them when the rope got caught in the rocks and pulled her in. My father began shouting "She is dead".

The journeys were often very difficult, especially when we were passing upstream through the rapids. The dogs would pull the boat with long ropes, a woman going ahead to guide them. The men would look after the boat. The passengers were not allowed to move. The men rowed and the man at the tiller had to be very careful.

I recall another accident. The boat was holed and the people in it were drowned. Two of them, an old man and his wife, were washed away and the stream carried their bodies right from the headwaters of the Payne river back to the village.

Mary Taqulik

Preparing for the long winter in days gone by

SHELTER: People used to live in tents made of skin from the springtime until late autumn. After hunting and fishing, they would return to Payne Bay in autumn but would leave again for their camp in the winter. They would use their tents until there was enough snow to build an igloo, putting up a wall of snow round them until the snow was deep enough to cut blocks out of it.

FOOD: After the summer hunting and fishing, the food was put in store. Seal meat was placed in balloon-shaped bags of seaiskin (purtaq) from which the fur had been removed. These were left on the spot and covered with rocks, and when the men or the dogs needed food in the winter they would go out by dog-sleigh to fetch it. It was impossible to transport all the fish and game taken during the summer to the winter camp as families travelled from summer to winter quarters by boat (umiak). The food consisted of dried and frozen fish, walrus, whale and seal meat. Shellfish were a favourite food in summer.

FUEL: In addition to wood, seal oil (ursuq) and various mosses were used for lighting the stove. They were stocked up in the autumn, like food. Brushwood was gathered before the snow fell. Fuel was needed every day for heating and cooking.

TRANSPORT: The traditional umiak of wood and skins was replaced by a more modern all-wooden boat. The umiak was only used in summer and a family rich enough to own one would invite another family to use it to return to winter camp (it could carry about ten people).

CLOTHING: Autumn was a very busy season for the womenfolk, who had to sew all the winter clothes for their husbands and children: mittens, atigi (warm jacket), coats of caribou or sealskin or eider-down-stuffed coats, sealskin boots, trousers. All this sewing was done in addition to the usual daily chores of cooking, collecting firewood and looking after the children.

HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT: This consisted of a soapstone lamp (qulliq), lamp oil, flintstone (kasuk), dried moss, sufficient sealskins to make the harness for the dog-sleigh, a wooden platform on which the bed was placed in the houses and hunting igloos, crockery and utensils.

TEMPERATURE: A sharp eye should be kept on the weather to see if it is suitable for hunting, gathering fuel etc. Check the weather very early in the morning.

FISHING TACKLE, WEAPONS: The hunter needs to have all his equipment in good order and ready for use. He makes fishing-spears (kakivak) sledges and a canoe (kayak), and cleans his gun. He makes a white screen out of a piece of cotton or skin, stretched over a wooden frame for seal-hunting, to conceal him from his prey. He gets his cartridges ready. Before guns came into use, hunters used to have to make their bows and arrows and harpoons. The hunter always needs to carry a knife and a bag with him.

SEAL HUNTING: The hunter may be hunting the seal single-handed on the ice. He climbs a hill to see if there are seals around. If there are, he sets off with his dogs, taking with him a youngster to hold off

Sun dance, stone cut print, by Kalvak

Solitude, stone cut print, by Kalvak

the dogs while he tries to kill the seal. After the kill, he signals to the youngster to bring up the sledge. If they suspect there are other seals in the neighbourhood, the youngster will stay in the background and try to calm the dogs.

FISHING IN WINTER: Fishing is done through the ice with a hook and line. One can also build a stone dam (saput); the fish then group together and can be speared with the kakivak.

FISHING IN SUMMER: Nets are used, and must be placed in a certain way if the catch is to be a good one. They should not be stretched too tight, they must be kept clear of waterweeds and must not be placed in deep water where it is difficult to net fish.

TRAPPING: Both men and women set traps. A good catch depends on having a good technique. The trap must be covered over with soft moss, not too thickly or the moss will get caught while the fox escapes. The scrap of meat or rotten eggs that are put in the trap should not be too big or the fox will be able to bite them without getting caught. The direction of the wind is important: if the trap is upwind from the fox, it will be attracted by the smell and go straight towards the trap.

Young boys also set traps. It is always a red-letter day when a catch is made as the proceeds of the sale can be used to buy tools or hunting weapons.

FAMINE: When food is short, families count on one another's help. Those who have a little food share it with their neighbours. People still remember particularly difficult years when families broke up and went their separate ways to avoid running out of food.

Siasi Grey
Saalati Simioni
and Minnie Annaatak

How to build an igloo in a storm

You need to know quite a lot to build an igloo. We used to build shelters for ourselves when we travelled with dogs and we still build them even now when we travel with snowmobiles.

It's dangerous when the snow is falling and the wind blowing at the same time. The igloo may be buried or you may lose your way. You must stop and think where to build and you must choose the right spot, otherwise the igloo may be blown away or covered with snow.

Nowadays we use fast snowmobiles which can get us back to the village quickly, if all goes well, but you have to learn to take precautions just in case.

You put a canvas screen upwind from the igloo; if you haven't got a screen, you can use blocks of snow. Soft snow is soon blown away and you cannot build with it. It is difficult to breathe inside the igloo when there is no wind. You should also be wary of freezing snow. When it is very cold and the igloo is on too high ground, the snow can easily be blown away.

If there is no good snow about, you have to build an igloo with whatever you can find. The best snow for building igloos is shiny, with crystallized snowflakes on its surface, looking as if rain had fallen on it. This is good snow; it looks the same on top and underneath. It is neither too soft nor too hard.

There are no trees here and you must be very careful when you go out hunting. If you are going to be away for more than a day, if you cannot get back to the village and a storm is in the offing, you must size up the situation very carefully. Every minute counts when snow is falling, the northeast wind is blowing and dark clouds are building up.

If you are making an igloo during a snowstorm and you see the snow piling up around the igloo, it is a danger signal, especially if you have only just started building. This has happened to me twice. When the fresh snow covers the igloo you must abandon it and find another place to build a shelter.

My brother used to go with me and I was careful not to let him out of my sight. I used to call him so that we did not get separated. If you cannot make yourself heard, it is better to call the dogs since they have very good hearing. This was how I found where I was when I called to my dogs for help. It is a good idea to carry some reserves in case of a sudden storm.

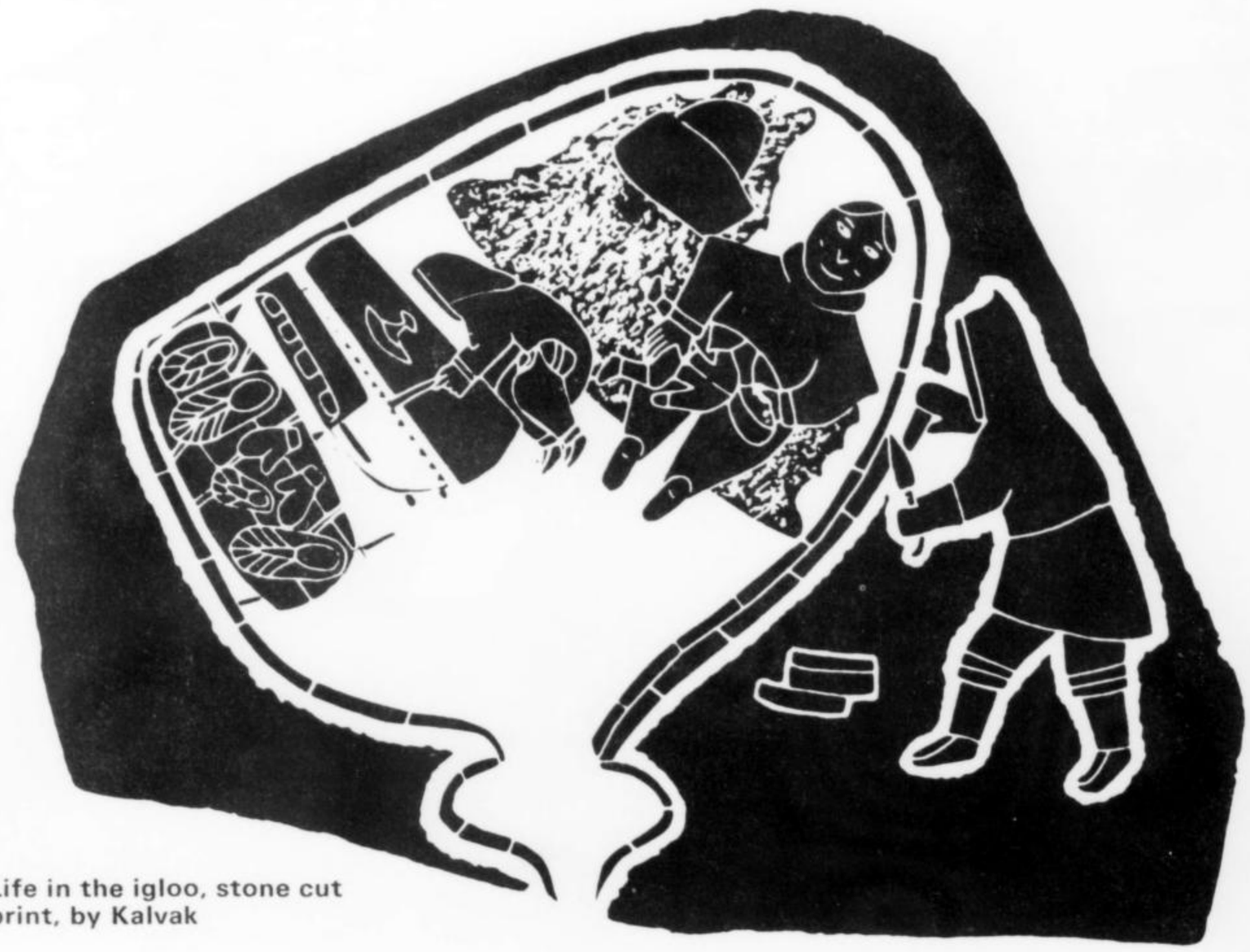
You must also look after the snowmobile. When we used to have dog sleighs, we built a platform with blocks of snow and put the qamuti (sledge) on it out of reach of the dogs, which would otherwise eat the harness. A snowmobile can get buried under the snow, and it is also very heavy to lift.

Before leaving the village, make sure you have a knife and a screen. Without these implements, a hunter can freeze to death or get frostbite in his feet if his snowmobile breaks down a long way from the village.

When the igloo is finished, you still need to protect yourself. Just coming into the igloo from the cold immediately makes you feel warm, but if you have no sleeping bag or heater it starts to feel very cold inside at night. When this happens, you must keep moving about. You should dig a hole in the snow and put your feet in the hole, keeping your boots on to prevent frostbite. You must also find something to sit on so that your clothes do not get wet.

I was taught how to get around and how to build a shelter. I watched others do it and I did it myself. You should try to do things that are worth doing. I say these things so that the young people should know about them. What I am saying will help them when they hear others talk about these things or have to do them themselves. They may seem hard to believe at first, but when you try them out, you will find that they are useful, particularly during our coldest months, December, January and February.

Zacharissie Tarqiapik



Life in the igloo, stone cut print, by Kalvak

The state of the ice in autumn

You should know that in the old days, when the dogs were crossing dangerous ice, it was easy to turn around and go back. In the daytime you could tell by the dogs what state the ice was in. Nowadays, the snowmobile keeps straight on and there is no means of knowing whether the ice is dangerous or not.

When you see small snowflakes on the surface of the ice it means that this is ice which has only just frozen and which is not yet very solid. So it is dangerous. You sometimes also see a sort of snow mixed with water.

You should never walk on new ice. Lakes sometimes seem to be frozen hard, but the ice may be very thin in the middle. There is no danger near the shores of the lake: the water begins to freeze around the edges and the ice gradually spreads towards the middle of the lake.

Zacharissie Tarqiapik

Dangers of the ice in springtime

There are several signs which warn you that the spring ice is dangerous. These are some of the signs you will see on lakes and rivers. Beware of holes filled with soft snow, which forms little bubbles. Melting ice is also dangerous. The ice sometimes looks firm underneath a layer of snow but the snow may conceal a hole.

Lakes which are in the lee of mountains often have holes filled with soft snow.

When you want to walk on a lake, it is best to keep at first by the shore where the snow is piled up. Ice and snow float better where the snow on the shore of the lake is deep.

Zacharissie Tarqiapik

Building a kayak

It takes four weeks to build a new kayak, including the time needed for sewing the skins. Four large seal skins are needed for a large kayak. The finished boat is heavy and two men are needed to carry it down to the water. The people of the interior used to use a kayak made of wood and caribou skin. It was light enough to be carried by one man.

Tumasi Kallak

Fishing

Put a piece of tunu (caribou meat), fat or guts of fish on the end of the line to attract the fish. You can also use a piece of white cotton.

The bait should not be attached too firmly or the fish will not bite.

Saalati Simioni

Gathering shellfish in winter

The fisherman makes a hole in the ice and slips down through it. At low tide, it is possible to crawl along under the ice. You take a lamp with you and in this way you can gather the shellfish from the rocks. Sometimes there is no need to make a hole, as the cracks in the ice are big enough for a man to pass through.

This is a very dangerous way of collecting shellfish. Fishermen have sometimes been unable to find the hole where they came in and have been caught under the thick ice as the tide rose.

Saalati Simioni

Owl, detail from a print by Joe Talirunili

Hunting

Floating ice is sometimes piled up by currents at the mouth of the Payne river. One must be very careful.

When you are going hunting and you want someone to go with you, never force anyone to go. They may agree to it without really wanting to. So they may be lazy and careless during the hunting expedition. An accident can happen or you can lose your boat if the person with you doesn't look after it properly. This sort of thing always causes trouble.

A woman can be very useful if she is used to hunting. She can do the things that a boy would do in similar circumstances and she will also learn to hunt well in addition to working at home.

When you kill a seal, you must cut it up immediately and put the pieces in the boat. If you get caught in the ice, you can then easily throw the pieces overboad. It is also better to stay within sight of other boats. If you are in danger you can easily call for help.

If you see a seal lying on the ice with its fur dry, it means that it is asleep. If its fur is wet it is not asleep and can see you perfectly well, as seals have sharp eyesight. You can try to catch it by making lots of noise.

The mother seal is very dangerous. It loves and protects its young. It will attack your boat if you try to kill the young. It has very sharp claws.

As they rise to the surface, big seals make bubbles. Just before a seal emerges, the ice moves and you will see two big bubbles. If you touch the ice, it will know you are there. The best thing is to hit it the moment it appears.

The small seal, known as tigituraq, is easier to hunt. Even if the boat makes a lot of noise as it runs into the ice, these seals are not bothered.

You can try listening for big seals by holding an oar pushed through the ice. When you hear the seal coming towards the boat, you must circle round and round the same point. The seal will then surface for a second.

Tiriluk seals are often found on ice floes around islands at low tide.

You sometimes see seals on the ice but you cannot get to them because too many ice floes are being carried along by the current, but you sometimes also see places which are not dangerous.

If you find a place where there is a lot of ice or where the ice floes are too near to each other, you can easily pull

Game, stone cut print by Akourak

away from the shore; when we used kayaks, it was more difficult as the kayak was heavy and had no motor.

Beware of freezing water. In autumn sea water is very heavy, much heavier than fresh water would be. When there is snow on the surface, it looks as if no snow has fallen. That is the time to be very careful. Also, you should not leave your boat on the ice near the water's edge, and especially not at right angles to the sea. The melting ice may break and the boat may slip into the water. Put it in a safe place. Ice breaks near the shore.

Before trying to walk on the ice when you have seen a seal, you must make sure that the ice will not break. When there is not much ice left round about, what remains will be brittle.

Take care of your canvas screen. Do not rest your gun near the frame. Fire over the top of the screen because some seals have very keen eyesight and you may otherwise miss your chance to fire.

If you are walking towards a seal and you see it move its head, you must stop if it starts to move.

Seals raise their heads when they are breathing in. They do not breathe when they are lying down, just as if they were in the water.

Simioni Simioni,
Zacharissie Tarqiapik,
Tumasi Kallak
and Augiak Tamisa

Hunting the fox

When the hunter goes around his traps in autumn, he sometimes sees a fox outside the trap. If the fox sees the hunter, the hunter must pretend not to have seen it so as not to frighten it away.

If the fox does not see the hunter coming, the hunter should hide behind a rock and whistle. The fox will think it is a lemming and will come closer.

If the fox is facing him, the hunter must stop when the fox stops, otherwise it will run away. When a fox is near and is not looking in the hunter's direction, the hunter should fire quickly before the fox sees him. If you see a fox asleep, rolled up in a ball, you can get very close to it.

Saalati Simioni

Hunting the hare

The hunter can follow the tracks of hares on the hills. If the hare is going round one side of the hill, the hunter can set off round the other side and meet it.

If the hare hides among big rocks to rest, it will stay there until the hunter sees it. When the hunter approaches, it runs away. The best thing to do is to pretend not to see it and to head off in another direction to find a good angle from which to shoot.

Never walk straight towards a hare. By approaching from the side, you can get very close to it. It is possible to follow the tracks of hare, but they may go on for a very long way. It is better to look elsewhere.

Saalati Simioni

Hunting the ptarmigan

Walk down wind. If you see several birds together and they fly off, you know that they will settle again. Walk down and fire. Some of them will fly away and settle a little further off. Keep following them down wind and in this way you can kill them all.

It is good for children to go with their parents to hunt the ptarmigan, but they must stay well away and be careful.

When the birds hide, you can follow their tracks.

Saalati Simioni

The diver bird

Old people believe that the diver bird can tell them certain things. When the diver is in the water and moves its body from side to side to show that its feet are pointing in a certain direction, it is called nulurtutuq, which means that it is holding its feet above the water.

You must then look to see if both its feet are raised: if so the diver telling you that it has seen caribou in a certain direction.

The hunter knows that the caribou are there but still a long way away if the diver does not dabble its feet in the water when it moves them. This means that the hunter will reach the spot where the herd of caribou is in two or three days.

He sets off straight away and when he arrives in the area indicated, he immediately sees tracks on the ground; he then follows them in the direction shown by the diver.

If the diver dabbles its feet in the water as it moves, then the hunter knows that the caribou are nearer.

If you are soon going to run out of food during the summer time, the diver appears to be very sad; it makes a noise showing that it knows the people are going to go hungry.

If you see a pair of divers dancing on the water and making a lot of noise, it means you are going to be lucky and have plenty to eat. They sometimes even disturb the water on a very calm lake and this is an omen for the hunters.

Killing a caribou,
stone cut print
by Kalvak

Joyfully, I see ten caribou,
print by Pootagok

When the diver flies in a circle and looks as if it is going to land, this means that there are caribou nearby but you cannot see them. If the hunter has understood this signal from the diver, he should go to a nearby hill to spot the caribou.

These things are only of use to those who know the habits of the diver.

What I have said is true: these things have really happened.

Tumasi Kallak

Hunting expeditions, yesterday and today

How shall I tell the story? Perhaps I can tell you what I know myself, by my own experience, things that nobody else has taught me.

I used to have dogs and a sledge. I went out in all weathers. When there was a snowstorm and I did not know which way to go, my dogs would help me. I would simply give them their head. Left to itself, a dog will find its own way, but if the hunter tries to direct it, the dog will probably get lost in the snowstorm as well.

Nowadays we use snowmobiles and we have to be very careful. There is nothing to help the driver. I can easily lose my way if I don't watch out. I know that some paths are dangerous. I would have been very glad if someone else had warned me about them. A track leading out of the village can sometimes become bad and dangerous, especially in springtime.

Unless I keep an eye on the weather, I can run into trouble. You need plenty of petrol for the return journey, especially if it takes longer than the outward journey.

It would have set my father's and mother's minds at rest if I had learned to move around safely away from the village: that is what the Inuit think.

Piita Angutinguak

Foot races and ball games

Puvirnituq means stinking rotten meat (during the hot summer).

There were several women who used to travel over the ice. They used to build their own igloo. There were also groups of men who hunted. They had a dog which used to smell out the holes in the ice. The hunters would stick their harpoons in the hole in the ice and pile blocks of snow all around. Then they would wait all night for the seal to come up to breathe. Sometimes they would fall asleep.

The men were so hungry that they grabbed hunks of meat. One of them cut his hand without even feeling it. One of the hunters who wanted to keep all the pieces for himself had nothing at all.

They fed their dogs on a kind of soup made with seal meat.

One of the hunters was responsible for warning the others if the ice started to break. If it did, they would set off for the land. The journey might take a whole day.

The igloo built on the ice had a block of ice in place of a window. This ice came from a lake which was often far away. Every time they moved they took the window with them but sometimes they forgot it and they would have to go back to fetch it.

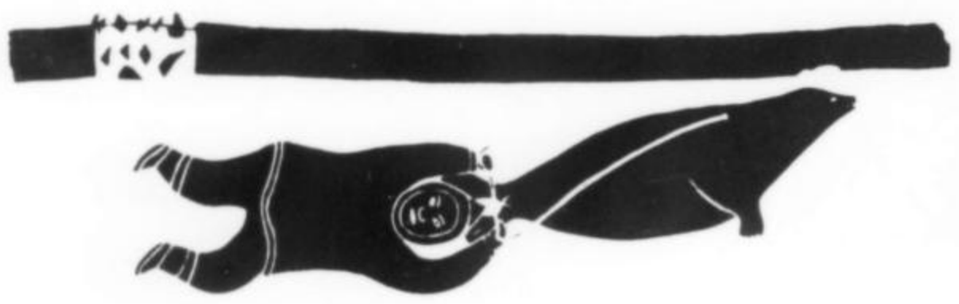
When they returned to Puvirnituq, the hunters used to collect whale oil during the summer. This used to be sent off to the south. Some hunters went away to hunt caribou inland. Those who stayed to work were taken on by the whites and were paid a wage; part of the money was given to them in the morning and the rest in the afternoon. A whole day's wages were called tatauti.

The various people of Ungava—the Sirqinirmiut, the Nunamiut and the Sinaamiut—used to get together for games. Some of these people lived on the coast, some on the mainland, and some on the ice. They used to organize competitions. Their clothes were very prettily decorated.

Two of the women folk had a reputation for embroidering beautifully ornamented clothes. They began to sell these to the Europeans and learned two words: yes and no.

There used to be foot races and ball games. To decide which of the teams should have the first turn in the team games, a circle was drawn and a stake to which was attached a loop of rope was driven into the ground. The ball had to be thrown as high into the air as possible and had to pass through the loop. ■

Tumasi Kallak



Caught out at his own game
stone cut print,
by Akourak

Geese, man, and animals, print, by Parr

Into the Soviet tundra...

Photo G. Volkov © "Sovietskoie Photo": APN, Moscow

...where learning to lasso reindeer is an everyday school subject

by
Vladimir I. Vasilyev

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THE peoples of the north in the U.S.S.R. have always handed down their stock-breeding skills from generation to generation within the family or the encampment. Young children were taught the basics of animal farming, and as they grew older they learned more advanced methods and techniques. Studies of this practice have led to the idea of a "people's school" providing vocational training for young people in the Far North.

The passing on of practical knowledge from parents to children has long been an integral part of general family education, in the past the only means of vocational training.

In czarist Russia schools providing general education in the districts inhabited by the peoples of the north were virtually non-existent. Then in the first years of Soviet rule school building began in the Far North and continued at a brisk rate. By the end of the 1930s there were 86 day and boarding schools in four of the seven districts of the Far North and in the Murmansk *oblast* (administrative region).

In addition to the permanent schools, mobile schools began to be opened in the tundra and the taiga forest regions of Siberia about 40 years ago, in reindeer breeders' camps, among fishing communities, and in places inhabited seasonally by hunters, fishermen and herdsmen. The purpose of these mobile schools was to provide education in the native tongues for the greatest possible number of children, most of whom at that time shared the nomadic life of their parents.

This intensive drive to open schools in the Far North paid dividends. In a fairly short time schools were available for all children over the age of seven, both those living sedentary or semi-sedentary lives and the nomads. By about the 1940s this education problem had been satisfactorily solved in most districts of the north. (See "Schools of the Soviet Far North", "Unesco Courier", June 1972.)

In the years which followed, particular attention was devoted to increasing the number of schools and improving teaching methods, specially adapted to local conditions.

In 1970, the Far North regions had more than 600 schools of different types, including primary (four years of schooling), shortened secondary (8 years' course) and full secondary (10 years' course).

These secondary schools provide training in various occupations such as reindeer-breeding, fishing, etc., and the teaching is specially adapted to farming conditions in the Far North regions, where reindeer farming is the chief activity.

The vocational training of children in the Far North as it exists at present comprises three main stages:

1) Vocational training for pre-school children and those in junior classes at school (5 to 10 years) generally takes ▶

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place within the family. At this age toys are the main teaching aids. These are usually miniature versions of tools which are (or were) used by adults in daily life. Among the most common are bows and arrows, which develop qualities such as accuracy and visual judgement. Hunting games such as throwing the lasso *(maoute, chaoute)* develop similar skills. Gradually, parents see to it that their children spend less and less time playing. Games begin to take on a more practical character: children use young reindeer as targets for lassoing and practise harnessing dogs to small sleighs.

The basic vocational training in the junior classes consists of energetic games and sports (especially skiing). No vocational training is provided in the primary schools, where all subjects are taught in the native languages.

2) The next stage of vocational training is important because it introduces the children to the techniques of fishing, hunting, reindeer-breeding and other occupations of the Far North.

At this age (11 to 15), the children familiarize themselves with fishing and hunting equipment. They are taught how to look after reindeer, and learn about the biology of furred animals and fish. They do jobs on reindeer farms, working directly with the reindeer-breeders.

The secondary school in the village of Novoye Chaplino (Chukotka district) is a concrete example of the kind of vocational training courses provided for the children of the Far North. Chukchi, Eskimo and Russian children attend this school, and in recent years the chief subject taught there has been the raising of furred animals.

In the two upper classes, two and three hours respectively were devoted to this subject each week. Lessons were also given on a stock-rearing farm belonging to the local kolkhoz (collective farm), known as *"Zarya kommunizma"* ("the dawn of communism"), under the direction of the biology teacher and a specialist in the breeding of furred animals. Each pupil looked after two or three animals.

Other schools in the north gear their education to hunting, fishing or reindeer-breeding, and some combine training in a number of these activities. The secondary school of Laryakskaja in the district of Khanta-Mansi is a case in point: it offers courses in hunting, fishing and the breeding of

furred animals. Another school, at Ust'-Belsk in the district of Chukotka, trains its pupils in fishing, breeding furred animals and raising reindeer. At Bajkitski in the Evenk district, the school provides instruction in hunting and the breeding of furred animals.

The education provided in each school is determined by the economic needs of the local kolkhozes and sovkhozes (state farms). Particular care is taken to ensure that the schools have adequate equipment and are well-staffed.

In practice, all the reindeer-breeding instruction is provided by the kolkhozes and the sovkhozes. For example, at Novoye Chaplino school mentioned above, the head teacher and the local kolkhoz arranged for pupils in the four senior classes whose parents were members of the farm's reindeer-breeding sections to work with them during the summer as apprentice-herdsmen. A large number of pupils in schools in the Taimyr district work during the summer in the fishing sections of the local kolkhoz, and during the winter holidays they help out in partridge rearing.

The family, however, still plays a key role in vocational training, depending on the children's ages. Skills normally acquired within the family include: how to use fire-arms, how to handle draught animals and reindeer sleighs, how to cure reindeer skins, make certain kinds of clothes and prepare food. Not all schools in the north can yet provide every aspect of the vocational training described above, and so the contribution of the family is still highly important.

3) During the final stage of vocational training, teen-agers specialize in the work they have chosen. After taking the short course of secondary education, some pupils choose to concentrate on reindeer-breeding and go on to attend more advanced courses in animal farming, which are available in many districts and in the bigger towns of the polar region. These schools train technicians specializing in the breeding of reindeer and furred animals. For instance, the Naryan-Mar technical school in the Nentsy district trained 608 students in 14 years, including 139 Nentsys and 135 Komis.

At the end of the short course of secondary education (and in some cases even before), some teenagers start work immediately in the various sections of the kolkhozes and sovkhozes, one pupil usually being assigned to each section.

In the hunting sections, pupils learn how to set traps, how to skin animals, how to treat hides, and how to track animals.

Apprentice fishermen learn all about the art of fishing: where to fish in different seasons, how to tell the depth of the water, and how to forecast the weather.

In the reindeer-breeding sections, the pupil learns all about the herdsman's job; he is taught about calving and migrations and how to distinguish between the different breeds of reindeer and the various kinds of pasture. He learns how to build and repair reindeer sleighs, and how to train draught reindeer and hunting dogs. A specialist is responsible for each pupil throughout the training period.

Training lasts from one and a half to two working seasons for fishing and furred animals and from two to three years for reindeer-breeding. After this the pupil becomes a full member of his section.

Such is the present educational system in the Far North of the U.S.S.R. In the future it will, of course, have to be improved. But generally speaking this vocational training system meets current requirements in training the specialists which are acutely needed by the farms and communities of the reindeer-raising economy of the north. ■

Vladimir I. Vasilyev

LEARNING BY DOING

In the vast Chukotka district of northern Siberia, reindeer farming is still the most important traditional occupation of the native peoples. In the Soviet Far North the schools provide special lessons on the habits of reindeer (below). But handling a lasso (left) needs a high degree of skill, and there is no real substitute for practical experience and guidance from parents.

Photo A. Vilachev © "Sovietskoie Photo", APN, Moscow

Photo V. Sukhodolsky © TASS-APN, Moscow

THE CHANGING CANADIAN ESKIMO

Continued from page 13

saw any explorers or whalers and some had very infrequent association with the traders. Historically they firmly believed that theirs and the animal life of the hunt was the only world of man.

This is reflected in the name they called themselves—Inuit—The People (the real or only people). The word Eskimo, meaning "Eaters of Raw Meat", appears to have originated from the language of the Algonquin Indians in Eastern Canada. It was absorbed into French and was first used in 1611.

Although early explorers of the Canadian Arctic had met Eskimos from time to time over a period of 300 years, they had few dealings with them. The people lived in a natural economy, gaining their food and clothing from the hunt.

They were sheltered through the long dark winter in an amazing piece of architecture—the igloo or snow house; in summer they lived in tents of seal or caribou skin. There was some sort of balance with nature and perhaps the population in those days was about 20,000 to 25,000, or nearly one-third more than the present figure of 15,000.

But there is no point in idealizing. Their numbers remained small because death came often. Eskimos starved, died by violence, died young. Possibly they had some of the diseases of our civilization before we came—arthritis, heart disease, pneumonia, appendicitis. Life was precarious and life was relatively simple. Eskimos had learned to conform to the nomadic hunters' way of life and the climatic cycle of the seasons.

They were almost imprisoned in their Arctic environment. The historian Arnold Toynbee refers to Eskimos as one of the arrested civilizations whose "tour de force" was living and hunting on or around the shores of the Arctic seas. This demanded so much of their energy that none was left to apply to further advances. The climatic cycle made them captives of their Arctic environment.

They had no written literature or writing of any sort but they had a strong cultural heritage in the story, the folk song, the drum dance. They had ethics, taboos and philosophies of social relations which were practical and effective for the good of all. In some respects their morality shocked the newcomers from the south, but it was a morality born of the Arctic environment and not Europe's.

In time it was we who changed their philosophy and brought many tensions and contradictions to these hardy, resourceful people. They retained their sense of humour even in the extreme adversity that they faced daily. One of their philosophical or fatalistic phrases passed down by generations to today is *Ayungamut:* it cannot be helped.

Traditionally, the Eskimo believed that the amount of game which the hunter secured depended upon his relations with the spirits who controlled the supply of animals. He used harpoons, fish spears, bird darts and bows and arrows and could usually obtain enough food to sustain life. The primitive weapons did not appreciably affect wildlife resources as a whole.

The introduction of the rifle made it much easier for the hunter to provide meat for his family, but it also put modern weapons into the hands of men who killed more than they needed. Resources on which they had depended for so long were quickly depleted. Whales were virtually wiped out; walrus were slaughtered and became scarce where they had been plentiful. The musk oxen were eliminated from the coastal areas.

By the turn of the century, the bottom had dropped out of the whaling market and a new influence came with the arrival of the traders. Hudson's Bay Company traders turned their attention to the fur of the Arctic or white fox; this luxury fur then became the principal commodity exchanged by the Eskimos for food, utensils and equipment from the south.

The trader was a more permanent fixture than the whaler; he introduced the idea of bartering white fox furs for store goods, and in so doing prevented the Eskimo from ever again being totally independent. The luxuries of store supplies became the necessities of the home.

The development of the white fox trade, however, has had both good and bad effects on the Eskimos. Opinions differ as to which out-balances the other. The trade had revolutionized their way of life and disrupted many of their traditional habits. The white fox was prime from November to April—the period when most Eskimos of the past would be hunting seals at

ESKIMO YOUNGSTERS, like all children, love to play and are especially good at improvising games with the simplest of materials. Opposite page, wooden planks on a mound of earth provide "springboard" see-saws for these children at Kotzebue in Alaska. Below, a Greenland Eskimo family has hung out its embroidered sealskin boots on a line to dry in the sun.

Photo Gunvor Jörgsholm © Pressehuset, Copenhagen

Photo J.-Ph. Charbonnier © *Réalités*, Paris

their breathing holes, the floe-edge, or at open water leads. The Eskimos replaced "bannock" made of flour for some of their customary foods like seal meat and developed a taste for tea, sweets and tobacco.

The white fox, before the advent of the white man, was perhaps the most useless animal in the country. The primitive Eskimo seldom used the pelt because it was not strong and durable like the seal, the polar bear or the caribou. It did not have layers of fat common to other Arctic animals with the result that the flesh was seldom eaten.

The Eskimo did not entirely give up his seal hunting practices to trap foxes; he only interrupted them during the short trapping season. The transition from a hunting economy to trapping and hunting was much the same as when our ancestors turned from hunting to agriculture and industry to obtain a better and easier way of life with many amenities resulting from the change.

From roughly the early years of this century onward to World War II, the allure of the new goods offered by the fur trade gradually enmeshed the Eskimos in a new economy and with it came the breakdown of a very ancient way of life. This influence was widespread in varying degrees over a million square miles of Arctic territory. However, until the world conflict Canadian Eskimos still lived a fairly primitive nomadic life in a remote, sparsely populated country.

The war and the rapid development of long-range air travel broke down the isolation of the Arctic. Defence, meteorological and radio stations were established at a number of places. The situation of the Eskimo people became a matter of concern to the Canadian public.

A high incidence of tuberculosis was discovered among the Eskimos, and epidemics of other diseases followed the greater contact with men from the south. The white fox market collapsed in 1949, creating serious hardship, and brought a rather belated realization that the Eskimos could no longer be treated as an isolated group.

Steps would have to be taken to prepare them to take their place in a changing Arctic and eventually to be integrated into the Canadian economy. With this inevitable change the Eskimos had three great needs—health, education and an economy that would support them.

One essential fact of the Canadian Arctic in the mid-twentieth century was that change had come and come irrevocably. Another essential fact is that the Arctic as it was in the early 1950s had to change again unless the Eskimos were to be condemned to slow exinction or permanent economic and social serfdom.

The land would no longer support them. The caribou had declined alarmingly from about 600,000 to around 175,000 in the five years from the end of the war to 1950. The white fox, sole Eskimo source of income, had dropped from $30 or more to about $5. The cost of store goods was rising.

The Eskimos had learned to read and write using a simple syllabic script, but their source of reading was mostly religious material. In the English or French language they were 95 per cent illiterate. One in eight had active tuberculosis. This was the early 1950s and as the world was becoming more and more conscious of the needs of the developing nations, Canada was becoming equally conscious of the needs of its first Arctic citizens, the Eskimos. The jet age broke down barriers of distance and the isolation of an almost stone-age people.

In the past decade great progress has been made in health care and all Eskimos now have regular medical examinations. Tuberculosis is a continuing problem and although they are building up an immunity to other diseases introduced from the south they are still subject to many of these.

One of the latest efforts made to raise the standard of living for Eskimos and combat the adversities of a harsh environment was the federal government's approval in 1965 of a five-year rental housing programme. The aim was to provide suitable living accommodation to all Eskimos in the north according to family size and at a rent based on family economy and resources. The nomadic igloo-tent life of the Eskimos is now changing to a community one.

One of the cornerstones of any framework of a positive social and economic structure is, of course, education. At the mid-century mark of 1950, out of an Eskimo population of approximately 9,000 in the Northwest Territories, only 120 Eskimo children went full time to school.

No Eskimos had reached matriculation, none had received a vocational training course, none could aspire to a job higher than trapping for the white man or being his interpreter. ▶

No intellectual attainment or career appeared open to the Eskimo people.

Prior to this time many of the missionaries conducted classes in association with their missionary activities. However, the percentage of children receiving any formal education was small when the federal system got underway around 1950. Additional schools or classrooms were built in the north each year. Today, after a short span of 20 years, over 90 per cent of all school-age children are attending school regularly.

The government is attempting to provide a system which will give the Eskimo people equality of educational opportunities with other Canadians. The language barrier and the problems of cultural dissimilarities have made it difficult to develop satisfactory curricula.

The language chosen for the medium of instruction is English. In the lower grades, Eskimo teacher assistants ease beginners into school routine and help bridge the cultural gap.

The development of the north requires skilled technical labour. Southern labour has been difficult to recruit and hold in the remote and harsh environment. Throughout the north, Eskimo men are being trained at various levels as miners, heavy equipment operators, plumbers, carpenters and mechanics. They hold positions as interpreters and clerks in retail and co-operative stores and in government offices. The government has set a desirable objective to fill 75 per cent of northern government positions with local residents by 1977.

Young Eskimo girls are learning to become teachers, hairdressers, nurses' aides and commercial cooks. They learn the techniques of homemaking in modern housing in home economic laboratories in nine Arctic communities. Their classes include home management, child care, home nursing, nutrition and clothing. These courses are also available to adults with little or no formal education.

There are many aspects to the education programme and one of the most important is adult education which, briefly, offers adults regardless of age or academic qualifications an opportunity to acquire new skills. It is also designed to inform the older generation who may feel themselves cut off from their children in school.

Eskimos are already involved in the search for and development of the mineral and oil wealth of the north, and a number have completed an oil-well drilling course in Alberta, and are now working in the High Arctic, in the oil industry. There is no doubt that the lives of many more Eskimos will change even more in the years immediately ahead as the accelerated pace of mineral development takes place.

But all Eskimos will not be miners. As Canadians, many will choose to live in the south. With education comes mobility and with mobility comes choice. This should be the ultimate objective of government policy—to provide a framework within which the Eskimo people may independently choose for themselves what kind of life they want to live and where they want to live it.

For the traditional Eskimo there was but one choice—to live off the land, to move where the game was. For the Eskimo of today the options have increased from living off the land to accepting wage employment of some sort at the settlement and adjusting to the routine of settlement life. But the options are still limited.

The hunting and trapping economy or the renewable resources of the north have always been limited in relation to outside markets rather than to the very much smaller local requirements. It would seem that within the 2.6 million square kilometres of the north and along the thousands of kilometres of coastline, there are certainly enough resources and potential resources to support a larger local population. This depends largely on locating the resources and improving the methods of harvesting them.

One traditional activity that is still popular is the hunting of seals. This provides food and cash for the skins and confers prestige on the hunter, which is equally important at this stage of cultural change when the dominant figure in the Eskimo way of life is being threatened in so many ways.

Associated with seal hunting is the trapping of the white fox. Although the number of trappers will no doubt decline as more and more turn to other forms of wage employment, there will always be those who prefer to trap as long as there is a demand for white fox furs. Our estimation is that there are still about 1,000 families spread over a vast area who continue by choice and circumstances to live by a hunting and trapping economy. Many of these people derive their main cash income from the sale of seal and fox skins.

Hunting, trapping and fishing are closely related to tourist promotion programmes involving Eskimos as guides and operators of sports lodges. The scenic and rugged beauty of the Arctic and the fish and game attract an increasing number of visitors to northern Canada each year.

Probably one of the most demanding adjustments and changes in the Eskimo way of life in recent years is urbanization. Today more and more families are leaving their small scattered family camps and are settling in concentrated communities designed on the model of southern Canadian towns.

The trading post has become a general store and isolated settlements are organized communities in a northern setting. This has led to a more sedentary way of life with all the amenities of a town such as municipal services, co-operative stores, schools, nursing stations or hospitals, churches,

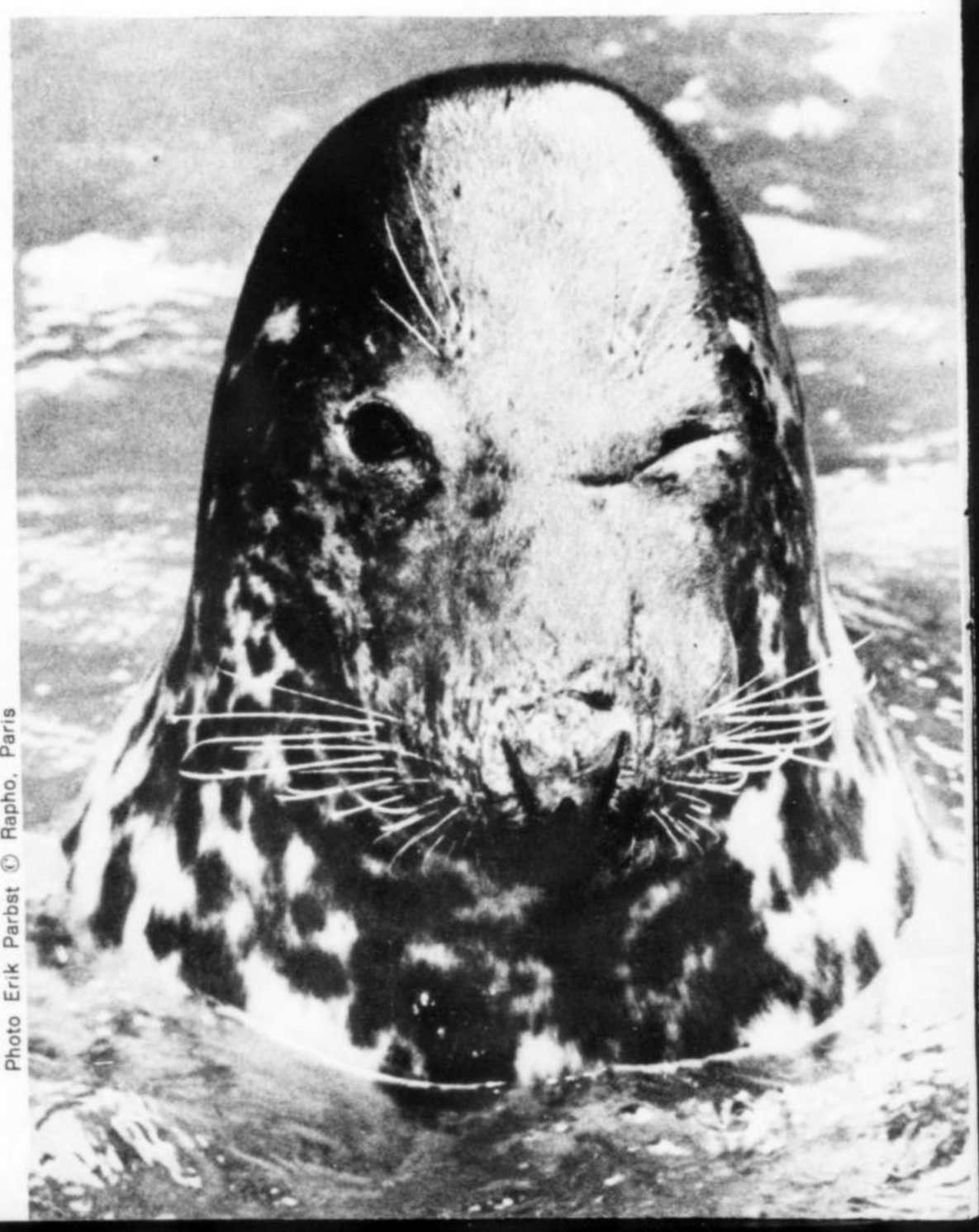

Photo Erik Parbst © Rapho, Paris

good housing, opportunities of wage employment and other facilities for an active social life within the established town. The growth of these communities, although bringing much that is good, has also meant a radical social adjustment for the Eskimo nomad now turned townsman.

Accustomed to the unscheduled and independent life of the camp, some of those employed find it difficult to comply with certain work regulations and the discipline of a nine to five day. The head of the family who continues to hunt and trap may travel on a skidoo [small motorized sledge] instead of by the traditional dog team. He leaves his family in their permanent home and covers his trapline, ranging farther afield than in times past.

Many people today still have romantic ideas about Eskimos: that they live in snow houses, eat raw meat and are pleasantly smiling, quaint people. This view is a particular weakness of writers prone to sensationalism after a week-end's visit to the Arctic.

It seems to me that in all the controversial material written about the Canadian Eskimo people today (much of it ill-informed and much overly sentimental) there is a tendency to forget that Eskimos are not quaint curiosities. They are ordinary human beings living in a special environment. Even with the transition and cultural clashes of change they share much of the same fears and hopes of mankind, and as Canadians today in democratic society they are expressing themselves.

There are many people who believe that the Eskimo should remain in a primitive state, and government plans for these people are often questioned. I think it is obvious, as Knud Rasmussen, one of the greatest authorities on the Eskimos, said, that "when the hand of civilization touches a primitive people anywhere there is no turning back". Therefore the benefits of accumulated human knowledge should be made available to all people as widely as possible.

Another question often raised is: are people better off if they have more material possessions, education, increased life expectancy, better health, more help in adversity? The answer can only be yes, because these things are the material objects as distinct from the spiritual objects of human aspiration and these are the areas in which are framed our concrete concepts of good, of morals and law.

The core of the problem, however, lies in the concept of northern development itself. The development of the north is a historical process which began in the past and is continuing into an unforeseeable future. For economic reasons alone, this process cannot be reversed. But there is an equally important aspect—the people. Pockets of human neglect are no more acceptable than are pockets of economic neglect. The responsibility of society must express itself both in terms of resources and of people.

In the north, the irony of the situation is that resource development is not only the prerequisite for human development but also the major threat to social responsibility. The potential of the land is being developed by means of the best that modern technology has to offer.

Where does this leave the people directly affected by such development? The concept of social responsibility precludes leaving the Eskimos to their traditional pursuits, a very unromantic life, regardless of the romantic picture that has been drawn by those who are blind to its hardships, its disease, the tragedy of death at a young age. Such attitudes would condemn them to nothing more than gradual extinction in the face of a technologically superior society from which they are excluded.

The only course open is one which, in some way, fulfils the social responsibility in terms of the hard facts of economic development. To be a vital part of society involves more than becoming a cog in a machine. It involves the concept of cultural identity and without this identity a large part of the human value of the nation is lost. It cannot function if it bears no relation to the economic realities of Canadian life which surround it. ■

Alexander Stevenson

MISSED ME! (left). The Eskimo language has dozens of words to describe seals (depending on their age, size, position on the ice, etc.), reflecting the major importance of seals to the Eskimos as a source of food, heating and clothing. In winter Eskimos wait for a chance to spear seals when they surface at their breathing holes in the ice. Often the quickness of the seal deceives the hunter's hand! Right, Eskimos pierce holes in the ice and sit patiently for hours to catch fish, a valuable item of fresh food during the long Arctic winter.

Photo © René Bonnardel, Aix-en-Provence, France

A Statement on Israel by Amadou Mahtar M'Bow Director-General of Unesco

Reports carried by press, radio and television on recent decisions by the eighteenth session of the General Conference of Unesco concerning Israel have frequently been lacking in accuracy and even objectivity.

Two resolutions adopted by the General Conference chiefly concern Israel: the first refers to the composition of regional groups set up within the Organization; the second refers to the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage in Jerusalem.

■ Because the resolution defining regions with a view to carrying out activities of a regional character has been interpreted incompletely or incorrectly, it has been maintained that Israel has been excluded from Unesco or denied the possibility of participating in its activities.

Israel has neither been ousted from Unesco nor from any regional group within the Organization. Israel continues to be a member of Unesco, as one of the 135 Member States, which make up the Organization.

Israel also continues to be listed, for elections to the Executive Board, in Group I (Western Europe) on the same footing as Australia, Canada, the United States of America and New Zealand, which are situated geographically outside of Europe.

During the eighteenth session of the General Conference, Israel, like Canada and the United States of America, introduced a draft resolution with a view to being included "in the list of countries entitled to participate in the European regional activities in which the representative character of States is an important factor." While the resolutions referring to Canada and the United States were adopted, the one tabled by Israel was rejected by the General Conference, that is, by the duly accredited representatives of the governments of the Member States of Unesco.

Thus, Israel is in exactly the same situation it was in prior to the eighteenth session of the General Conference. It therefore cannot be argued that it has been ousted from anything at all; the only new fact is that Israel is now the only Member State not to be included in one of the regions "with a view to the execution of regional activities", since Australia and New Zealand, at the proposal chiefly of five Asian countries, have been listed in the Asia and Oceania group, while Canada and the United States (at their request) have been listed in the Western European group.

Canada and the United States, I should recall, had requested —unsuccessfully—at the seventeenth session of the General Conference in 1972 to participate in the Second Conference of Ministers of Education of European Member States. At that time nobody, either in Canada, or the United States, much less in Europe, accused Unesco of having excluded them from any regional group whatsoever. Thus, these countries have, like Israel, taken part in the conference held at Bucharest in December 1973 as observers. This possibility is open at all times to Israel should a ministerial conference again be convened in Europe. In the same way, Israel can participate as an observer, as it has done in the past, at any regional conference of ministers no matter where it is held.

■ The second resolution "invites the Director-General to withhold assistance from Israel in the fields of education, science and culture until such time as it scrupulously respects the resolutions and decisions" of the Executive Board and the General Conference.

This resolution is based essentially on resolutions 2253 of 4 July 1967 and 2254 of 14 July 1967 of the United Nations General Assembly and resolutions 267 of 3 July 1969 and 298 of 25 September 1971 of the United Nations Security Council on the status of Jerusalem, as well as on the decisions of the Unesco General Conference at its fifteenth and seventeenth sessions and of the Unesco Executive Board at its 82nd, 83rd, 88th, 89th and 90th sessions. When it adopted a new resolution, the General Conference considered that the Israeli Government had not heeded the urgent appeals made to it since 1968 calling on it to "desist from any archaeological excavations in the city of Jerusalem and from any modifications of its features or its cultural and historical character, particularly with regard to Christian and Islamic religious sites." Noting that the excavations and works were continuing which it considered susceptible of endangering the Christian and Islamic sites, the General Conference decided six years after issuing its first notification, to condemn the attitude of Israel, which it considered "contradictory to the aims of the Organization as stated in its Constitution..."

I wish to stress that in reaffirming all the prior resolutions concerning Jerusalem the General Conference again explicitly invited the Director-General to " continue his efforts to establish the effective presence of Unesco in the city of Jerusalem."

Such are the facts. I hope they will permit the general public to form a fairer and more accurate opinion of the resolutions adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session. Similar decisions have been taken in the past without giving rise to the reactions of these last few weeks.

There has been reference to the "politization of Unesco", as if the agencies of the United Nations system had not in fact been born of a political determination to found a just and durable peace by contributing to the general progress of humanity and to strengthening understanding and co-operation among all peoples. Unesco is composed of almost the same Member States as the United Nations. The delegates to its General Conference are government representatives. It is therefore natural that the problems which perturb the world today should find an echo there.

For my own part, as I had occasion to say at the close of the eighteenth session of the General Conference, I think that, in an Organization devoted to education, science and culture, we must avoid those conflicts which take on the character of systematic confrontations. We should perhaps also avoid the adoption of resolutions, even with large majorities, that could result in deep bitterness in certain quarters. The golden rule for an organization such as Unesco should always be the search for a consensus through patient and open dialogue.

That is why, as the newly elected Director-General, who had not taken part in the discussions which went on long before my election, I indicated to the General Conference my firm intention —if so authorized— to speak out henceforth and whenever it is necessary, in order to try to reconcile different points of view so as to reach the widest possible agreement.

I therefore regret that on the basis of information which is to say the least incomplete and often distorted, certain eminent persons have thought fit to adopt such uncompromising attitudes, although thinkers and scholars might be expected to be more inclined to discussion and dialogue.

I think it is appropriate to recall that for nearly 30 years Unesco has been engaged in a vast undertaking, in its fields of competence, with the help of men and women of all origins and all creeds for the good of the international community, and that today in the Unesco Secretariat itself men and women from more than 100 Member States—including Israel—are joined in a common effort.

I am firmly convinced that it should always be possible for Unesco —if only interested States agree to work along with it—to overcome the tensions which hinder international co-operation and understanding in its fields of competence. But this presupposes that the norms and rules established by the Organization should not be considered a dead letter each time they conflict with specific interests.

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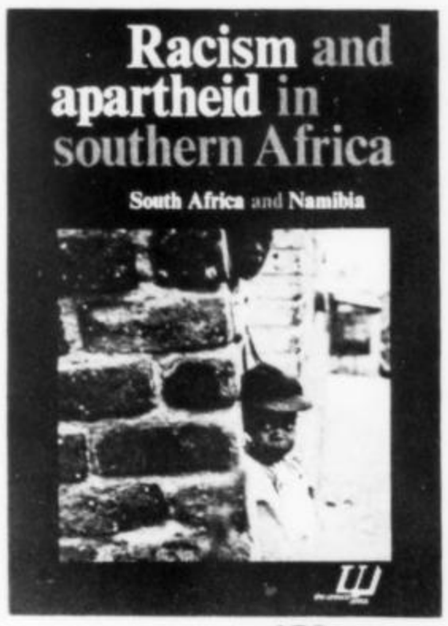

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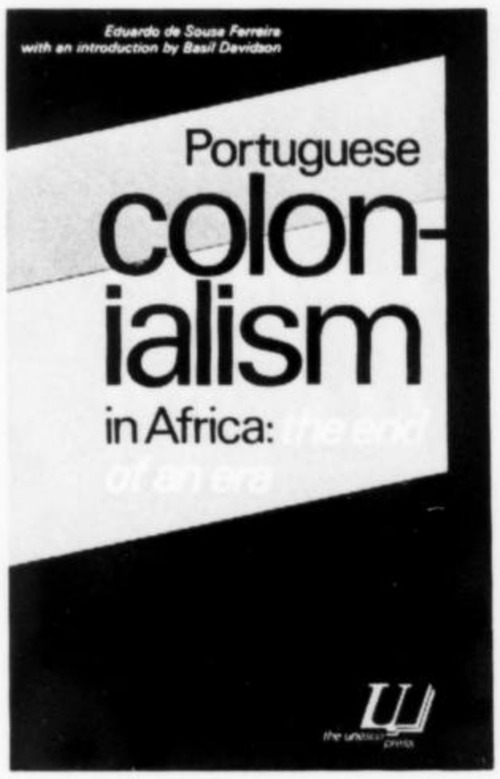

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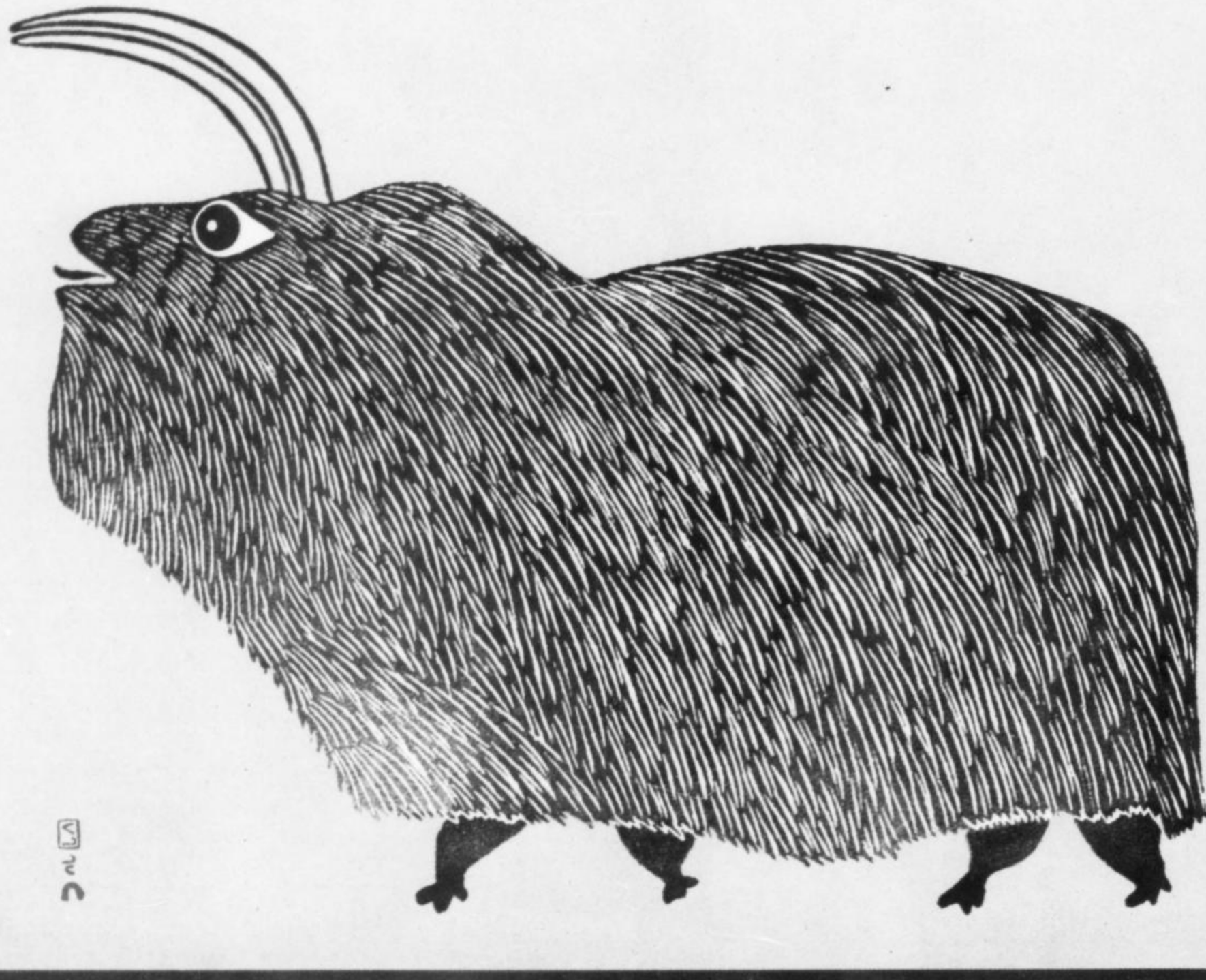

Artists of the Far North

Artists of great talent, the Eskimos have always decorated everyday objects such as tools, utensils, hunting weapons and musical instruments, sculpting or engraving walrus tusk ivory, caribou antlers, wood or stone. Works by Eskimo artists are nowadays known and admired around the world. The two shown here, stylized portrayals of northern animals, are from Cape Dorset (Canada). Top, "Baby owls", a stone cut print by Eskimo artist Jamasie. Bottom, "Musk ox", by Pudlo, decorating an Eskimo print calendar, "On the Land — Cape Dorset 1975" (see also illustrations on pages 21 to 26).

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